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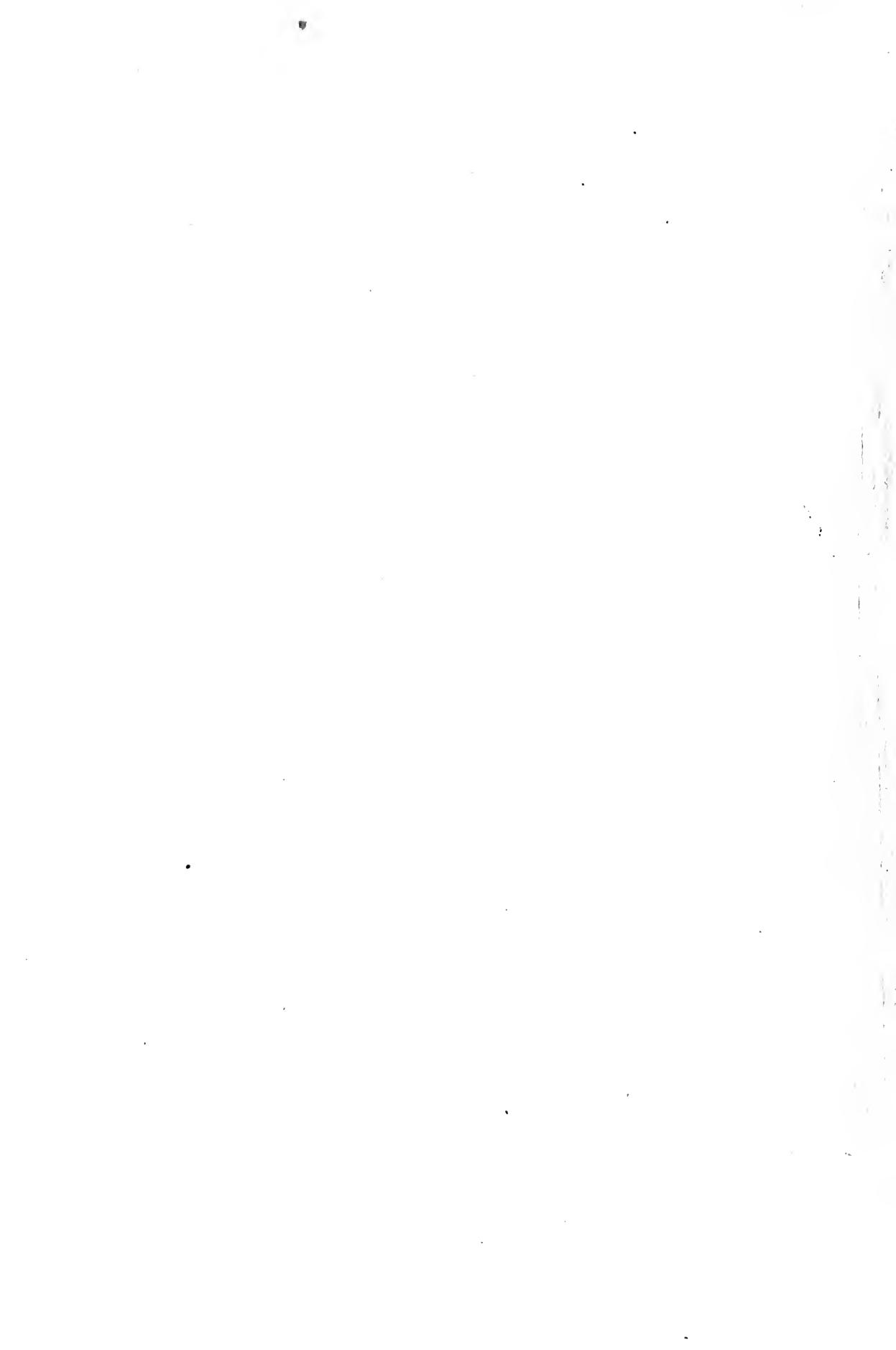


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GREAT DÉNÉ RACE

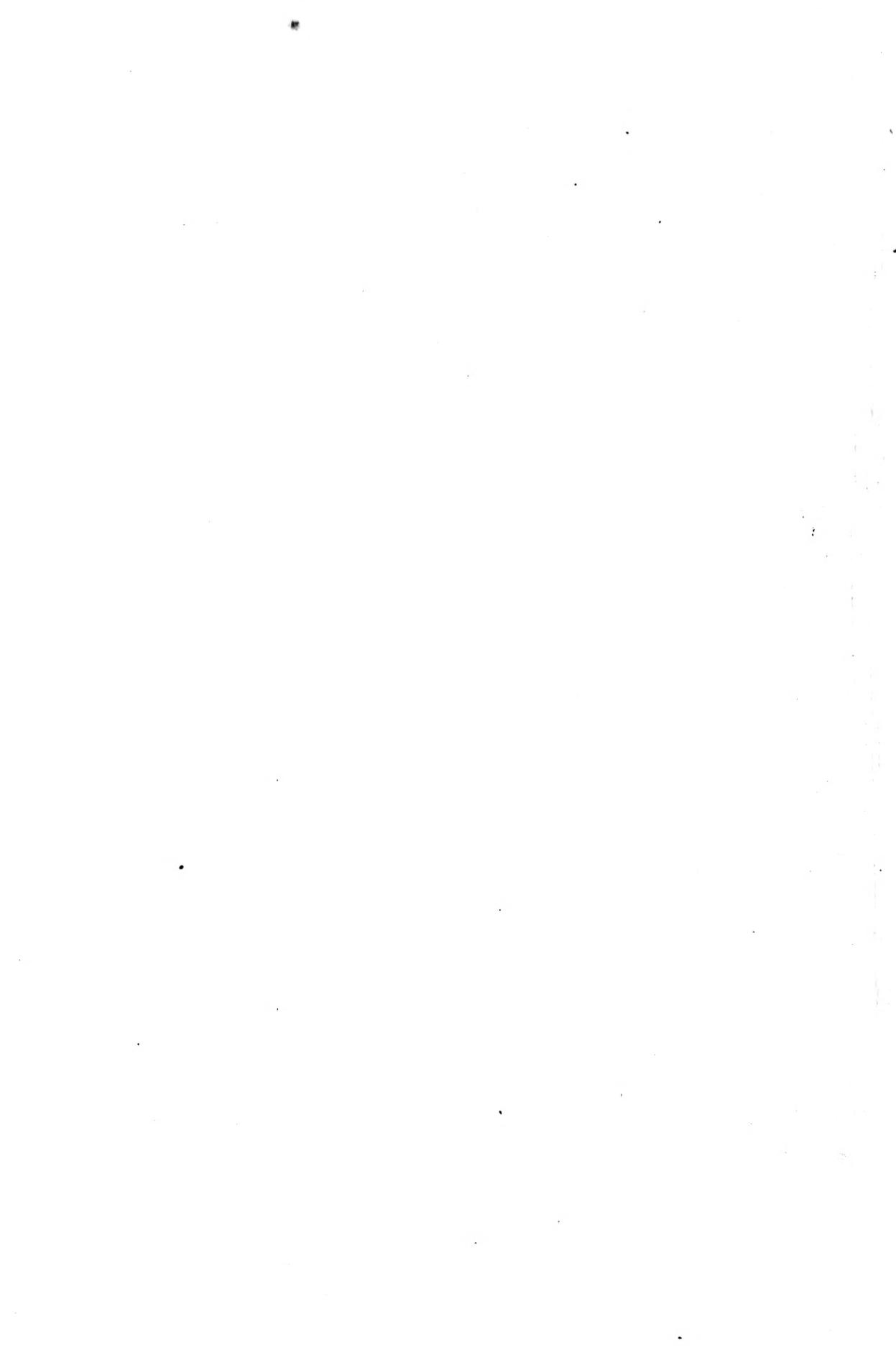
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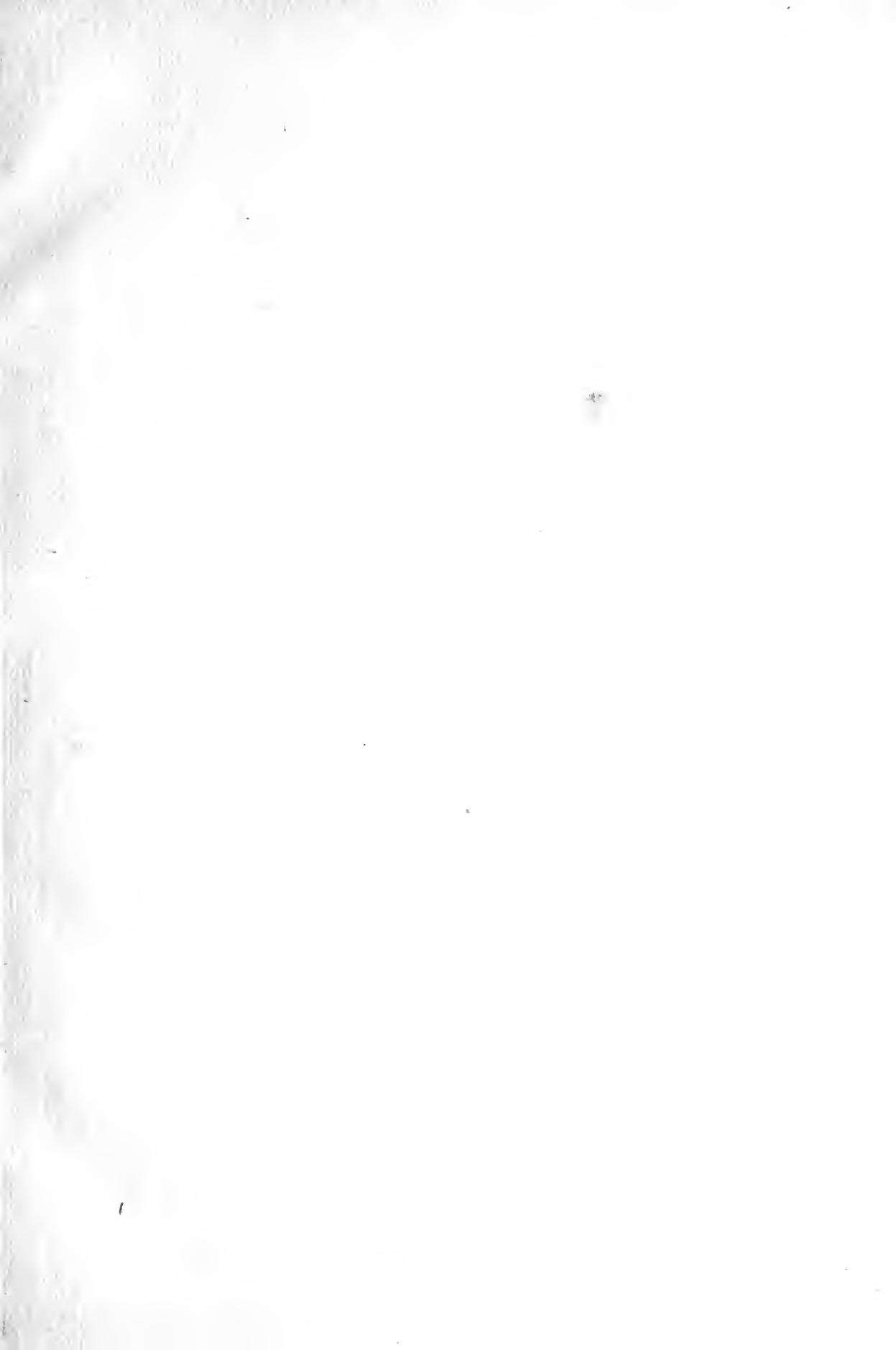
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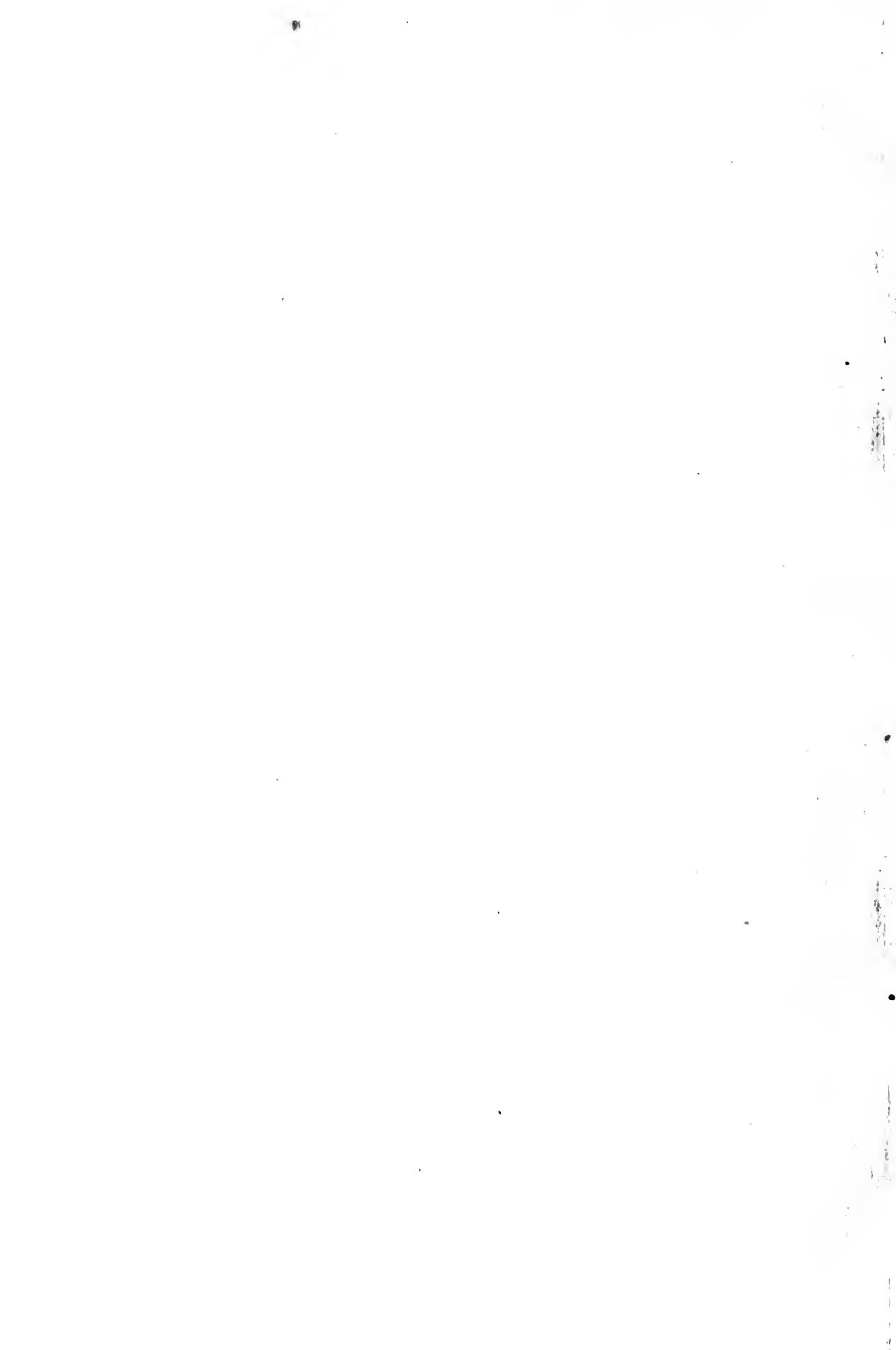


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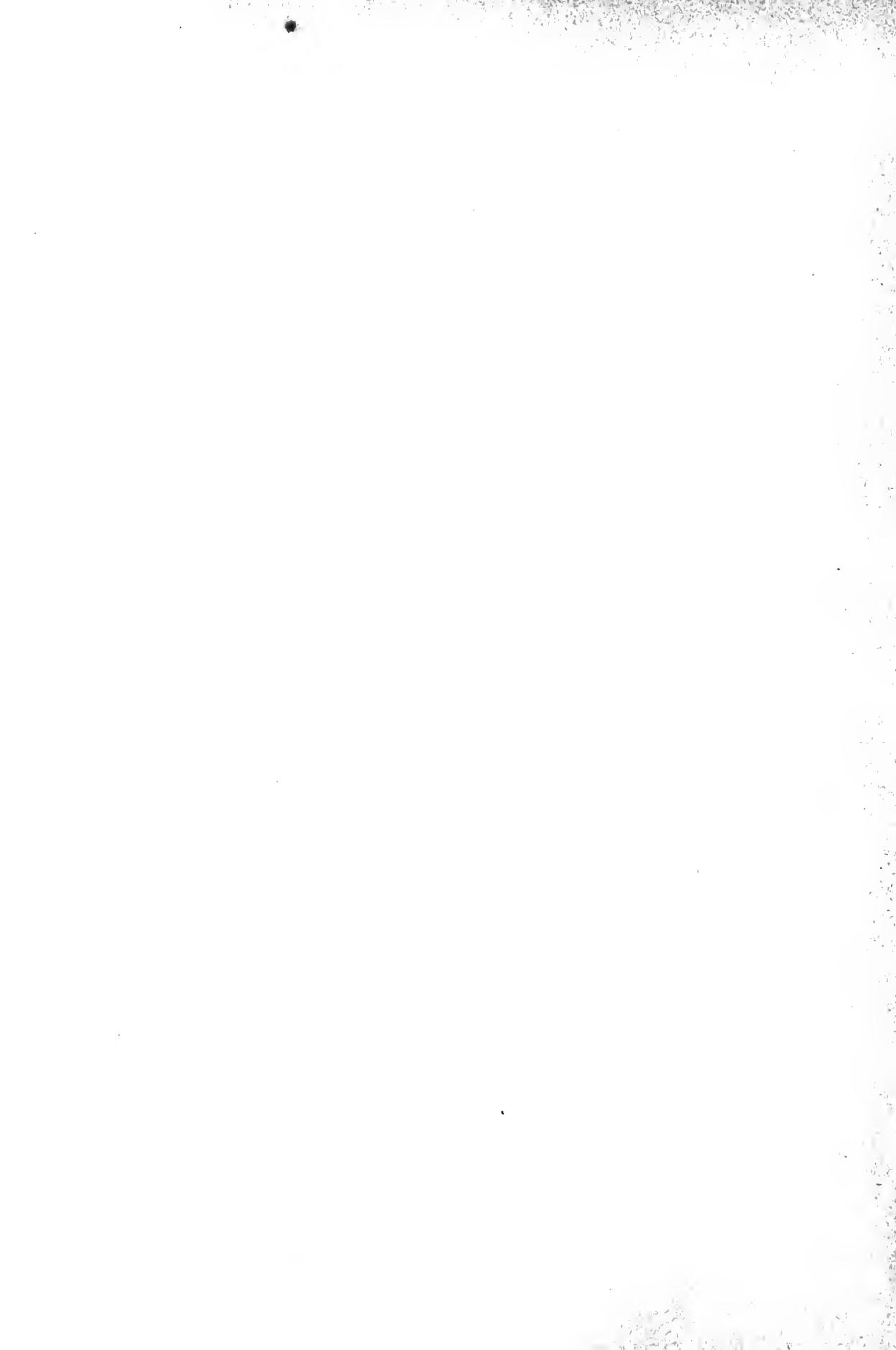
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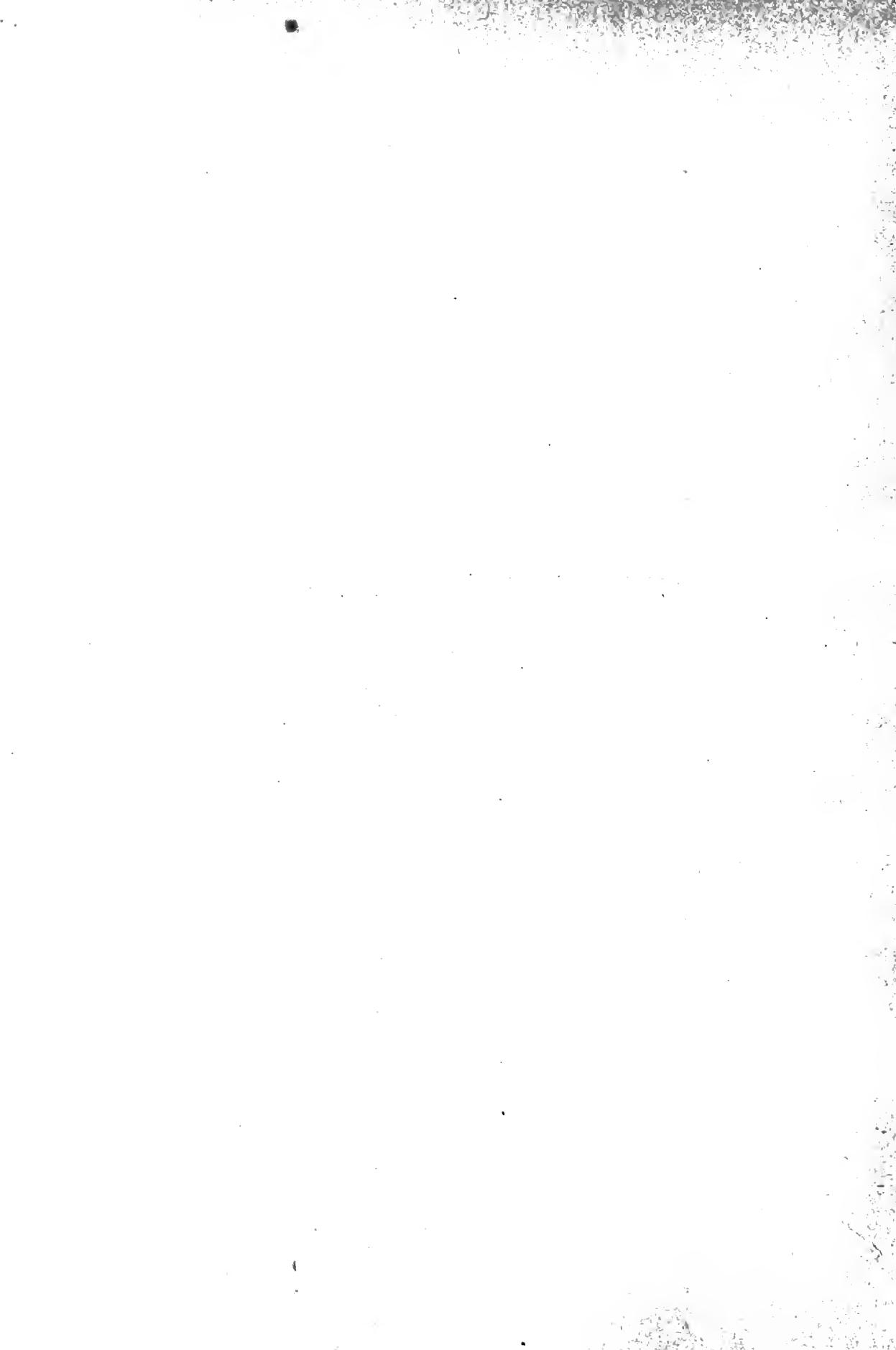






# THE GREAT DÉNÉ RACE

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# THE GREAT DÉNÉ RACE

By

A. G. MORICE, O. M. I., M. A.

Laureate of the French Academy and of the Geographical Society of Paris; Honorary Member of the Royal Canadian Institute; Life Member of the Art, Historical and Scientific Society of Vancouver; Member of the Philological Society of Paris, of the Anthropological Association of America, of the Ethnological Committee of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, of the Anthropological Club of Ottawa, of the Society of Natural History of British Columbia, of the Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba, of the Geographical Societies of Quebec and Neufchatel (Switzerland), and of the Historical Societies of Saint-Boniface and of the Canadian North-West

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## FOREWORD.

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The pages which are herewith presented to the Americanist appeared originally in the first volumes of "Anthropos", the famous Austrian review. They were intended as the beginning of a great work the manuscript of which having eventually become the prey of the flames, its publication was forcedly interrupted.

Since that fateful night of November 1910, more pressing labours have ever prevented the resumption of the work by the author, who nevertheless fondly hopes that the seventeen chapters which have survived the wreck are not altogether unworthy of being offered the anthropologist, desirous of studying in its details one of the most primitive races of the American continent.

The fact that only a limited edition of the same can now be procured at any price will even probably enhance its value in the eyes of connoisseurs.

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## Table of Contents.

### CHAPTER I.

#### Name of the Dénés and their Habitat.

##### In the North.

Introductory 1. — Improper names of the stock 2. — Real name 5. — Habitat as represented by various maps 7. — Powell's map 9. — Discoverers and authors on the question 13. — Real boundaries 15. — Geographical features 17. — Climate 19.

### CHAPTER II.

#### Distribution and Population of the Northern Dénés.

Population in general 21. — The Loucheux and their name 22. — Habitat of the Loucheux 23. — Distribution of the Loucheux tribes 25. — The Subarctic Dénés 28. — Athabaskans or Eastern Dénés 31. — The Intermediate Dénés 33. — The Western Dénés 37.

### CHAPTER III.

#### The Southern Dénés.

The great scission in the Déné family 40. — Effects of the exodus 42. — The Northern Dénés remembered by their southern kinsmen 43. — The names of the Southern Dénés 45. — The Navaho country 46. — The Apache tribes 47. — Distribution of the Navahoes 50. — Erroneous identifications 52. — The Pacific Dénés 54. — The connecting link between south and north 56. — The Déné tribes with habitat and population 58.

### CHAPTER IV.

#### Physical Characteristics of the Dénés.

Features common to the whole nation 60. — The physique of the Northern Dénés 61. — In the west 63. — Among the Southern Dénés 64. — Sexual characteristics 65. — A remarkable physiological phenomenon 66. — The acuteness of their senses 67. — Limitation of their visual faculties 69. — Their fortitude in times of distress 70. — Pathological conditions 71. — Longevity and commiscegenation 73.

### CHAPTER V.

#### Personal Adornment and Deformation.

Care of the hair 74. — As to facial hair 76. — Tattooing 77. — Face painting 79. — Bodily deformations and mutilations 80. — Every day head ornaments 82. — Non-ceremonial body ornaments 84.

### CHAPTER VI.

#### Dress and Personal Habits.

Dress of the Southern Dénés 87. — The Loucheux costume 89. — Among the Northwestern Dénés 90. — Dress of the Western Dénés 91. — Minor details of the wearing apparel 93. — Moral sense as evidenced by the costume 96. — Washing and personal habits 97.

## CHAPTER VII.

**Mental and Moral Characteristics.**

The terrible Apaches 100. — The timid Hare 102. — In the west 104. — The chief characteristics of the nation 105. — The Dénés' fondness for exaggeration 107. — Their shrewdness 109. — Their receptiveness 110. — Their cruelty 111. — Their great honesty 113. — *Scinduntur doctores* 115. — Their morals 118. — Minor traits of their character 120.

## CHAPTER VIII.

**Economic Conditions.**

General condition of the Northern Dénés 122. — Necessity the mother of invention 123. — Deer the staple food of the Northeastern Dénés 124. — Other species of game 126. — Smaller game 127. — The musk-ox 128. — Feathered game 130. — Famine 131. — Cannibalism 133. — Treatment of the weak 134. — Brighter conditions in the south 136.

## CHAPTER IX.

**Habitations.**

The Dénés nomadic 138. — Summer habitations of the Northern Dénés 139. — Summer houses of the Western Dénés 141. — Winter habitations 144. — Circular huts or tents 146. — Home furnishing and etiquette 148. — Outbuildings 149.

## CHAPTER X.

**Cooking and Eating.**

Unspeakable dishes 152. — Other queer dishes 154. — Cooking 156. — Gormandizing 158. — Food preserving 160. — Drinking 161. — Smoking and snuffing 163.

## CHAPTER XI.

**Hunting.**

A criterion of tribal status 165. — The fur-bearing game of the Dénés 166. — Modes of hunting 168. — The chase 169. — Impounding 170. — Decoying 172. — Snaring 173. — Beaver hunting 177. — Trapping 179. — Observances of the hunter 180. — Game laws and etiquette of the hunter 183.

## CHAPTER XII.

**Fishing.**

Fishes and fish names 185. — Ichthyophobia in the south 186. — Fish-nets 187. — Fishtraps 189. — Other fishing methods 192. — Fishing observances 194.

## CHAPTER XIII.

**Other Occupations.**

Berries in the north 196. — Berry picking and preserving 197. — Esculent roots and plants 200. — Occupations of the Hupa women 201. — Sheep tending and agriculture 202. — Occupations according to the seasons 203.

**CHAPTER XIV.****Travel and Transportation.**

Travelling in general 206. — Snow-shoes 208. — Snow-shoeing 210. — Ancient sledges 213. — Modern sledges and sleighing 214. — Hauling 217. — Canoes and navigation 218. — Wooden crafts 220.

**CHAPTER XV.****Commerce.**

Home transactions 222. — Intertribal commerce 223. — Aboriginal middlemen 225. — Native currency 226. — The trading companies 228. — Trading with profit 229. — Modern currency of the fur trade 231.

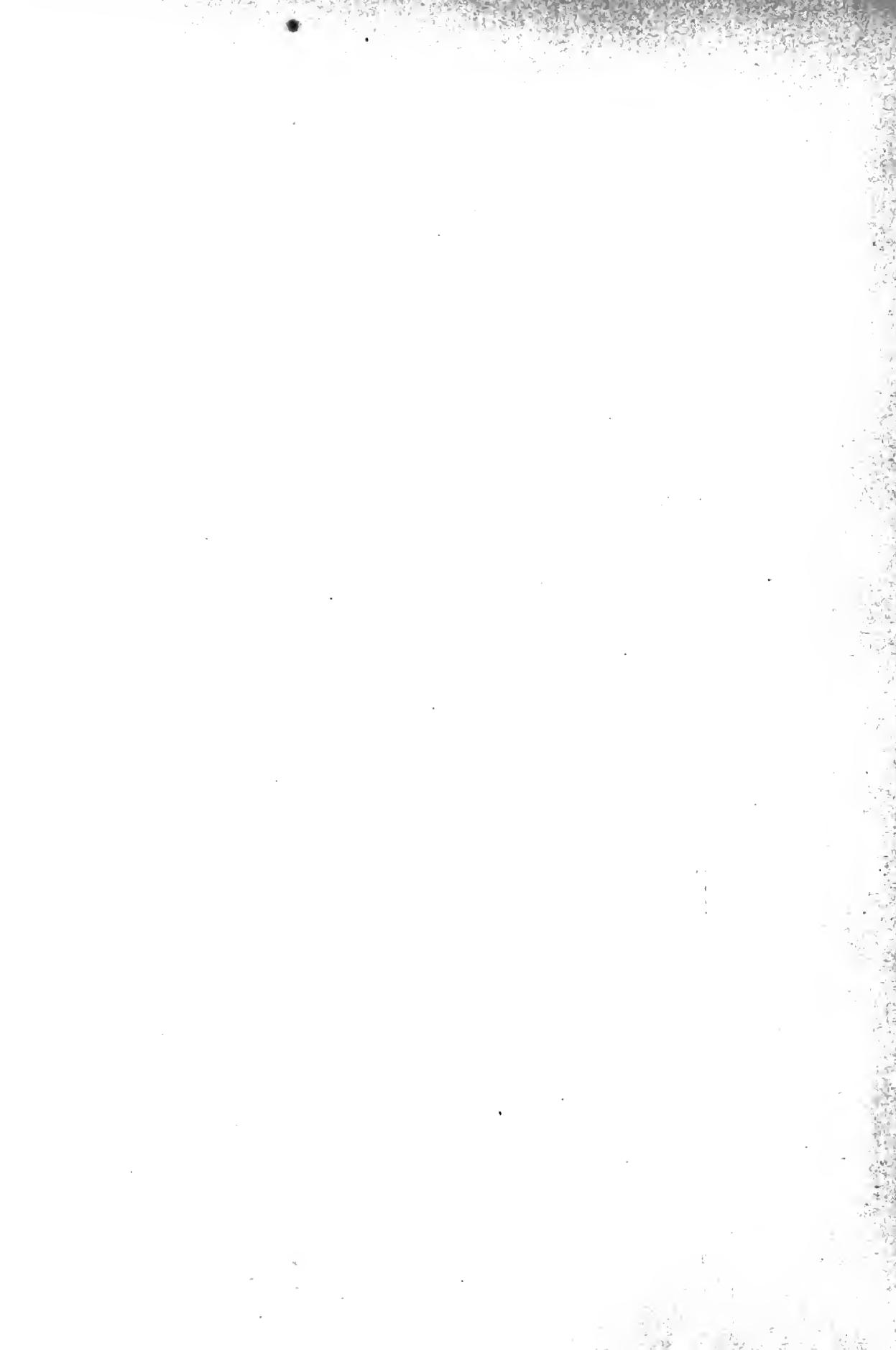
**CHAPTER XVI.****Puberty Customs.**

Menstruation and its consequences in antiquity 233. — Jewish customs among the Déné maidens 235. — Proofs 237. — Other puberty customs 238. — Among the Pacific and Southern Dénés 241.

**CHAPTER XVII.****Marriage.**

Native ideals of female beauty 244. — Betrothing and courting 245. — Marriage in the northwest 247. — Wrestling for a wife 249. — Other ways of contracting marriage 251. — Celebration of marriage 252. — Restrictions to marriage 253. — Unholy gratifications 255.

---



## Table of Photogravures.

---

	Pag.
A trader's scow shooting a rapid . . . . .	16
Kutchin winter lodge . . . . .	24
Doubly "Carriers" . . . . .	32
Apache lodges . . . . .	48
Skin lodges on Great Slave Lake . . . . .	72
Portaging . . . . .	96
Back from the hunt . . . . .	112
Camp of hunters on the shore of the Mackenzie . . . . .	128
Apache home . . . . .	136
The dawn of civilisation . . . . .	144
The results of a buffalo pound as seen to-day . . . . .	168
A buffalo hunt . . . . .	168
Barren ground caribou . . . . .	184
Fishing through the ice of the Mackenzie River . . . . .	184
Fish hanging out to dry . . . . .	192
A Navaho flock . . . . .	202
A busy family in the south . . . . .	202
Winter travelling . . . . .	208
Tracking on Athabasca River . . . . .	216
The results of modern commerce in the north . . . . .	224
H. B. Co's Transports loaded with fur . . . . .	232
An Apache bride . . . . .	244
P. Beaulieu . . . . .	252

---



## Table of Figures in the Text.

---

	Pag.
Metal tweezers . . . . .	77
Horn tweezers . . . . .	77
Navaho skull flattened at occiput . . . . .	80
Ear pendant . . . . .	82
Dentalium pendants . . . . .	82
Nose ornament . . . . .	83
Mother-of-pearl ornament . . . . .	84
Crescent shaped nose ornament . . . . .	84
Temple ornament . . . . .	85
Horn bracelet . . . . .	86
Fire-bag . . . . .	95
Comininal lodge . . . . .	141
Plan of same . . . . .	141
Smaller plan . . . . .	142
Lodge of the Tsesaut . . . . .	143
The Carrier winter hut . . . . .	145
Underground hut plans . . . . .	146
Loucheux hut . . . . .	147
Hupa head-rest . . . . .	150
Carrier cache . . . . .	150
Chicoton cache . . . . .	150
Bark kettles . . . . .	157
Old Carrier pipe . . . . .	164
Caribou snare . . . . .	174
Bear snare . . . . .	174
Another bear snare . . . . .	175
Lynx snare . . . . .	175
Another lynx snare . . . . .	176
Marmot snare . . . . .	176
Rabbit snare . . . . .	176
Yukon grouse snare . . . . .	176
Net buckle . . . . .	178
Barbed harpoons . . . . .	178
Castoreum bottles . . . . .	178
Marten trap . . . . .	179
Lynx trap . . . . .	180
Sékanais marmot trap . . . . .	180
Carrier fish weir and traps . . . . .	190
Other fish traps . . . . .	191
Hanging fish trap . . . . .	192
Chilcotin fish harpoon . . . . .	193
Carrier fish harpoon . . . . .	193
Berry basket . . . . .	197

	Pag.
Bark pail . . . . .	197
Berry boiling kettle . . . . .	198
Barking implement and cambium scraper . . . . .	200
Loucheux snow-shoe . . . . .	209
Carrier snow-shoe . . . . .	210
Snow-stick . . . . .	212
The way to use it . . . . .	213
Déné sledge . . . . .	213
Eskimo sledge . . . . .	216
Alaskan Déné sledge . . . . .	216
Girl's drinking tube . . . . .	239
Girl's comb . . . . .	240
Ceremonial scratcher . . . . .	242
Apache scratcher . . . . .	242

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# The Great Déné Race.

## CHAPTER I.

### Name of the Dénés and their Habitat in the North.

#### Introductory.

To many of us America has long been a name to conjure with. The glowing, if not too faithful, pictures of Chateaubriand's pages, and the thrilling adventures of Jas. Feniimore Cooper's heroes have filled our young imaginations with distant visions of lordly trees and boundless plains, under the shade, or over the vast expanse, of which noble-visaged aborigines, with plumed heads held erect and busts bedecked with fringes of dyed porcupine quills and other native finery, promenaded grave and silent, or accomplished their sacred rites on the top of mounds or in ceremonial lodges. To our benighted minds the American Indians were then the unspoiled children of nature, simple as the air they breathed and pure as the crystalline water they drank. Even Catlin's paintings or their printed reproductions, completed through the medium of the senses what those writers had done for our inexperienced intelligences.

Alas and alack! Why should we have to confess that much of that Arcadian innocence, that aboriginal high-mindedness and innate dignity existed nowhere else than in the fertile brains of the romancers?

Yet, the study of the native inhabitants of the western continent cannot fail to prove attractive especially to such as have outgrown the first cravings of youthful fancy. A huge island isolated, except at an insignificant point of its northern extremity, thousands of miles from the rest of the world and unknown for centuries to the almost totality of mankind, America is by all means the best field for the investigations of the anthropologist and of the philologist. It is evident from the multiplicity of the various races which have crowded one upon another, especially on its northwestern coast, that it became, in ages now enshrouded in the mist of incertitude, the dumping ground, as it were, whereon the exuviae of ill-starred humanity were led to take refuge, either as a result of unforeseen accidents, or at the bidding of the migratory instinct.

Thus segregated from the influences of the older world, these stray remnants of our own kin must of necessity be suggestive to the thoughtful

student of anthropological lore, inasmuch as the unavoidable evolution operated by time and the influence of environment in their lives, manners and customs, or even languages, cannot but be fruitful of portentous results.

Geographically speaking and from the viewpoint of ethnographical researches, the northern half of the western hemisphere is undoubtedly the most important, and, among the fifty-eight odd native stocks, all distinct from one another, which originally peopled it north of Mexico, I know of none which, at the present day, could be of such paramount interest to scientists as that which is to be the subject of the present work. One, the Algonquin family, could lay claim to a slightly vaster patrimonial domain, and the Iroquois can also boast a more thrilling history. But, compared to the Déné, both, especially the latter, can almost be represented as races which had their day, but whose stars are now eclipsed by the brighter light of modern civilization.

Not so, however, with the great Déné family. Its geographical position in the frozen north, the compactness of its immense territory within British America and Alaska, its remoteness from disintegrating influences, and its relative nearness to the continent which was evidently its cradle, cannot fail to commend it most strongly to the lover of things primitive and the investigator of the original condition of mankind.

### Improper Names of the Stock.

That race may already be known to some readers under the now antiquated name *Tinné* or *Tinneh*. Father Petitot called it by the compound word *Déné-Dindjiè*, and such writers as follow the lead of the Smithsonian Institution, at Washington, now designate it as *Athapaskan*.

The first denomination is not a noun, or a verb or any other part of speech, and there is no tribal division of the family calling itself thereby. It is, when properly spelt, a mere verbal desinence, such as the Latin *-enses*, *-ani*, or *-colæ* in the locative or descriptive nouns *Lugdun-enses*, *Rom-ani*, *sylvi-colæ*, and their modern French and English counterparts *-ens*, *-ans*, in *Parisi-ens*, *Parisi-ans*; *Londoni-ens*, *Londoni-ans*, &c.

Moreover the exceedingly delicate phonetics of the Déné languages demand that the initial *t* of those would-be words should be accompanied by what American philologists call a "click", a sort of lingual explosion which totally modifies the value of the letter and the sense of the word in the composition of which it enters. This is utterly unpronounceable to the majority even of students, not to speak of common readers. But we need not tarry any longer on this particular point. The question has lost its actuality, as that appellation is now becoming obsolete.

As to Petitot's *Déné-Dindjiè*, it was intended to give expression to the names of the two remotest tribal divisions of the stock, as he conceived its extent and distribution when he wrote, thirty years ago; namely the Chipewayans (*Déné*) and the Loucheux (*Dindjiè*). But, as we shall see further on,

the Chippewayans are far from being the southernmost of the Déné tribes. The parent tree has sent out vigorous offshoots far into the American Union and even old Mexico. That which is the farthest south, the Apache<sup>1</sup>, calls itself *Nde*, instead of *Déné*. Petitot's compound name, for which may be claimed the advantage of genuine Déné phonetics, has never been adopted outside of its originator's writings<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> The Lipans, who went farthest south, were nothing else than an outlying band of Apaches.

<sup>2</sup> The above, and much of what follows, had been written for some time when, through the courtesy of Prof. W. H. Holmes, I was put in possession of W. H. Dall's "Tribes of the Extreme Northwest", on which American ethnologists have long relied for their classifications of the Alaskan Déné tribes. I am sorry to say that, in his treatment of the Dénés, he betrays an ignorance of their language and phonetics which is decidedly painful to behold in a man who commences the enumeration of their northwestern tribes by lecturing Father Petitot on his linguistic shortcomings. It seems that a person who, though he may be an authority as a naturalist, could not speak out properly a single sentence in any of the many Déné dialects, should not have presumed to take to task such a Déné scholar as Fr. Petitot, who has published valuable grammars and dictionaries of three Déné dialects, and is widely known as the great and only authority on the very idiom of those Indians whose tribes Dall enumerates. I hold no brief to defend, at this late hour, the learned ethnographer against the ignorant remarks of his critic; indeed, I have myself on several occasions — notably in the second volume of the *Année Linguistique* — affirmed my right to differ from the views of the reverend gentleman, who was not a little handicapped by the little familiarity he enjoyed with the works of the American ethnologists, and I shall freely do so whenever occasion presents itself in the course of this work. But his failings are less linguistic than ethnographic, and in the case of Dall *versus* Petitot, I do not hesitate to declare that scarcely an atom of right can be found on the side of the former. Dall assures us that Fr. Petitot "is in special error in regard to the term 'tinneh'. This he erroneously derives from a verb, 'osttis, je fais' and writes *otinne*". He then adds: "It is indeed strange that he should not have recognized in *tinneh* a direct derivation, or more properly, a correct orthography (for the western tribes, at least) of the word he does adopt, namely *Déné*, meaning 'landsmen', as the Germans would say, the *o* being merely an inserted euphonic" (p. 24, footnote). He then appeals to a few English-speaking fur-traders as to the "true meaning of the word" against the statement of a philologist who spoke several Déné dialects nearly as well as his native French! I must charitably presume that, when he so wrote, Dall was not aware of the extraordinary competency of the man he attacked. "There can be no manner of doubt", he further adds, "as to the word 'tinne' and its representative word 'Kutchin' meaning 'people native to the region' respectively indicated by its various prefixes". To which I beg to answer that Dall's diagnosis of the whole case is made up almost entirely of illusions and linguistic misconceptions, as any one familiar with simply the rudiments of the Déné languages could see at a glance.

In the first place, he evinces a deplorable ignorance of the Déné phonetics when he flaunts his *tinjee* against Petitot's *dindjié*, since the Déné ear knows absolutely no difference between *d* and *t*. The two readings are identical as to results, save for a delicate vocalic shade in the last syllable, which Dall could not be expected to notice, who never as much as perceived the much more emphatic "clicks" in the tribal names he records. I leave it to up-to-date philologists to appreciate the appositeness of his English *ee*. Then one can hardly keep serious in the face of the American writer's contention that *tinneh* (lege *'tinne'*) and *déné* are the same. Such as have some knowledge of the Eskimo terminology will understand the difference between the two when I state that while *Déné* (or *Tène*) is the exact equivalent of *Innuit*, men, *homines*, *-tinné* is the Eskimo tribal desinence *-myut*, which means people

With regard to the nickname Athapaskans, it rests solely upon the authority of the Smithsonian Institution. Many ethnographers and travellers had indeed used that word in the same sense before it was invested in 1892 with a sort of official sanction, but the same is equally true of Tinné and Tinneh. Nay, these latter names can even claim a semblance of authenticity, inasmuch as they are intended to represent words taken from the language of the tribes thereby denominated, while Athapaskan is a hybrid term, half Algonquin, half English. Lake Athabasca, in Cree a "place of hay and reeds"<sup>1</sup>, is frequented by an important eastern Déné tribe, and in 1836 Albert Gallatin named the whole stock after it. Hence the decision of the Washington ethnologists.

Now, would it be proper to name the entire French nation, say, Lyonese or Parisians, because Lyons and Paris are its chief cities; the English, Manchesterians for a like reason, or even the Austrian Tyrolese?

But we are told, in answer to our objection, that "priority demanded that Gallatin's name should be retained"<sup>2</sup>. To which I retorted in the most lengthy of my essays, "methinks that time cannot of itself convert a wrong into a right"<sup>3</sup>. And then if simple anteriority is to decide the question, it might be that even this should turn out to be against the use of Athapaskan for the entire family. Arthur Dobbs, a former Governor of North Carolina, is the very first author to furnish us with anything like an account of the Dénés<sup>4</sup>. He wrote in 1774. But for a really adequate description of the family such as it was then known, we must turn to Samuel Hearne's valuable work, which, owing to the capture of his fort and papers by the French under La

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of, in Latin *-enses*, etc. Why does not Dall call the Eskimo *Myut* instead of *Innuitt*? In the beginning of Chapter II we will further see that Tinneh is *not* the counterpart of Kutchin. Again, Petitot is quite justified in deriving the suffix *-o'tinne* — which is the only proper one in the east, as even *tinné* has absolutely no meaning anywhere — from the verb *os'ti* (or *ostti* in his own graphic system). But this means not to do, but to inhabit, the eastern *o-* (western *hwo-*, *kwo-* or *ku-*) implying a reference to a locality, instead of being, as Dall pretends, "merely an inserted euphonic". On the contrary, this is precisely the only part of the word which changes the sense of *es'ti* (in the west *aes'ten*) from to do into to inhabit. Withal Petitot is right as to the ultimate root of the word.

In his text Dall affirms (p. 25) that "the northern Tinneh form their tribal names by affixing to an adjective or phrase the word (*sic*) *tinneh*, meaning 'people', in its modifications of *tin'neh*, *tarna* or *tena*, or in one group *kutchin*, having the same meaning". This is evidence of the same delusion, aggravated by a reference to a part of speech, adjectives or adjectival terms, which has no existence in Déné.

<sup>1</sup> This is on the authority of Father Lacombe. Fr. Petitot translates the word "a network of grass" (*Mémoire abrégé sur la Géographie de l'Athabaskaw-Mackenzie*, p. 148), while the early explorers' maps call that sheet of water "lake of the hills", a denomination which, in 1829, J. Franklin restricted to one part thereof.

<sup>2</sup> "Bibliography of the Athabaskan Languages", p. v.

<sup>3</sup> "Notes on the Western Dénés". Trans. Can. Inst., vol. IV, p. 9.

<sup>4</sup> "Account of the Country adjoining to Hudson's Bay".

Pérouse, did not appear before 1796. I had long imagined that their expression "Northern Indians" was intended to comprise all the Dénés, such as known to their contemporaries; but a closer examination of their texts leaves no doubt in my mind that they meant thereby nothing else than the tribe now called Cariboo-Eaters. In the case of the latter author nothing can be more certain. The habitat of those Indians is the barren grounds to the northwest of Fort Churchill, whence he wrote<sup>1</sup>. Yet it is incontestable that the phrase was, in his time and long after, conversely used as synonymous with Athapaskans or Dénés<sup>2</sup>.

Sir Alexander Mackenzie is the first writer to refer to the whole stock by an Anglicized Cree word. He generally calls it Chepewyan, though he also recognizes as a collective name therefor the word Déné, which he spells Denee and applies to at least three different tribes. His "Voyages" were published in 1801. In 1829, the ill-fated explorer, Sir John Franklin, in his relation of his own journey, usually called them all Chipewyans or Northern Indians; but he did not fail to add that "they style themselves generally *Dinneh*, men or Indians"<sup>3</sup>, by which he evidently meant Déné.

All these authors wrote after a lasting contact with, and close study of, the aborigines they described, long before A. Gallatin, who never lived with them.

### Real Name.

Be this as it may, whether we nickname them or not by a hybrid word whose elements are derived from the vocabularies of two allophylic races, or even go to the length of dubbing them *Irkhéleit*, louse larvæ, as do the Eskimos of the lower Mackenzie<sup>4</sup>, those Indians will not the less be to themselves *Déné*, that is, men, or people. Such is the name the great majority of

<sup>1</sup> "A Journey from Prince of Wales Fort to the Northern Ocean". In a footnote to p. 177 of his work he expressly discriminates between the Northern Indians and "their southern friends, the Athapuscow Indians", thereby implicitly locating the former in a region which tallies with the territory of the Cariboo-Eaters. On the other hand, he cannot mean by that expression either the Yellow-Knives or the Dog-Ribs, who live also to the north of the "Athapuscow Indians", since he repeatedly differentiates them therefrom. Thus, pp. 178-79, he mentions the attempts which "have been made to induce the Copper [Yellow-Knife] and Dogg-ribbed Indians to visit the Company's Fort at Churchill River", and he adds almost immediately that "several of the Copper Indians have visited Churchill, in the capacity of servants to the Northern Indians".

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Th. McKeevor, for instance, who wrote as late as 1819, presents us at the end of his "Voyage to Hudson's Bay" with a vocabulary of the language of the "Oochepayans, or northern Indians" (p. 74), which, however, contains nothing but Cree words.

<sup>3</sup> "Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea", vol. II, p. 50.

<sup>4</sup> *Monographie des Déné-Dindjié*, p. XIX. According to J. Richardson ("Arctic Searching Expedition", vol. I, p. 353), the Eskimos, presumably of a different tribe, call them *Allani-a-wok*. The Tsimpsians and Tlinget of the north Pacific Coast name them respectively *Ts'axts'aut* and *Gunaná* i. e. "those of the interior", and to the Crees of the southeast they are *Ayatši-wiyiniwok*, i. e. foreigners.

them assume. A few slightly alter it to suit the requirements of their own particular dialects, such as, for instance, the Chilcotins who say *Tæni*<sup>1</sup>, the Beavers *Dané*, the Navahoës *Diné*, and the Dog-Ribs *Duné*. With only two, the Loucheux of the extreme north and the Apaches of the farthest south, is there any important, though by no means essential, modification of the national name. The former lengthen it to *Dindjiè*, and the latter shorten it to *Nde*.

By yielding to that apparent egotism, which would seem to make them see in their scattered bands the true representatives of the human race, the Dénés simply follow the example of many aboriginal stocks which can lay no more plausible claim to that distinction, such as the Eskimos (*Innuit*), the Aleuts (*Unangan*), the Crees (*Neyowok*), the Saulteux (*Anitšinebewok*), the Illinois (*Illiniwok*), the Hurons (*Ontwaonwes*), the Kolloosh (*Tlinget*) of the Pacific coast, the Tungus (*Boye*) of northern Asia, some Carib tribes, etc. All of these would fain pass themselves off as *the men*, almost to the exclusion of the other nations, the members of which are to them nothing but foreigners, or enemies, unless they be designated by the particular names of countries they inhabit.

Is not our own race liable to be called to account for a similar breach of modesty, when it denominates itself Aryan, from a Sanscrit word (*Aryā*) which means noble, illustrious, or generous? Some of its divisions themselves are not any more remiss than our Dénés in their claims to national superiority. Witness, for instance, that people widely known for the simplicity and primitiveness of its ways, the Boers. Do they not represent themselves merely as *Menschen*, i. e. men?

It should be remarked, however, that the western Dénés, especially those more in contact with alien races, as the Babines, the Carriers and the Chilcotins, do not seem quite so exclusive in their vocabularies, or I should perhaps say that, while the Carriers have ceased to arrogate to themselves the monopoly of human entity, the first and the last tribes still do so, but with a qualificative. Ever since they have had intercourse with the white traders, the Carriers call, not only themselves, but all the other American aborigines as well, *Takhetne*, a word which Harmon translates "those who go on the water"<sup>2</sup>, but which, as regards etymology and signification, is foreign to the tribe which uses it, and perfectly unintelligible, except for the desinence

<sup>1</sup> The reader must not forget that in the Déné dialects *t* and *d*, *k* and *g*, *p* and *b* are commutable to such an extent that the native ear can perceive absolutely no difference between, for instance, *déné* and *téné*. Moreover, the vowels, especially if not initial, have hardly any importance at all.

<sup>2</sup> "An Account of the Indians living West of the Rocky Mountains", p. 242. *Tha'-kæ-khetne* would have that signification. *Takhetne* cannot be represented as a contraction of this compound, since, though *tha* means water in most of the Déné dialects, *ta* has reference to the lips.

-ne, which is expressive of the personal plural, as the -wok or -wak of the Algonquins. As for the Babines and the Chilcotins, they more commonly call themselves and the entire family to which they belong *Yinkhētæni* and *Nænkhaitæni* respectively, that is, people of the universe, reserving the terms 'Qætnè and *Œnna* (synonymous of *Atna*) for all the heterogeneous races, not of European or Asiatic descent, with which they are in immediate contact.

To the western Dénés the whites are *Neto*; the French, *Su-Neto*, or the true white men; the English, *Sagænaz*, a corruption of the Algonquin *Aganæſ<sup>1</sup>* transformed into *Saganaſ* by the Saulteux intermediaries; the Americans, *Boston*, from the town whence the first representatives of their nation in British Columbia originated. The Crees and the Iroquois having appeared west of the Rocky Mountains in company with the white traders, whose manners they aped, were on that account reputed superior races and therefore gratified with distinctive names, instead of the *Œtna* reserved for the Tsimp-sians, the Tlinget and the Salish. The former are called *Tæſine* (singular *Tæſin*), and the latter, *Natoh* (plur. *Natohne*), from the Algonquin *Natowe*.

The eastern Dénés dub the English *Tſé-o'tinne*, inhabitants of the rocks; the Americans *Bestſorh-o'tinne*, people of the big knives, and the French, *Banlay*, "those to whom the earth belongs". To the insulting epithet by which the Eskimos call them, they retort by designating the latter *Enna-khé* and *Othel-na*, meaning thereby foreign feet and the foreigners of the plains, though Petitot is authority for the statement that the first of these appellations has also a most opprobrious signification.

On the other hand, southern Dénés — by which expression I mean here especially the Navahoes — know all the white men who are neither Mexicans nor Spaniards as *Belagana*, a word which is a corruption of the Spanish *Americano*. But the Mexicans are to them *Naakai*, white enemies or foreigners, while the Spaniards, especially the original explorers of the southern countries, are dignified with the designation *Naakai-Diyini*, the Holy (or Supernatural) White Foreigners.

### Habitat as represented by Various Maps.

As the Dénés are spread from the sunny plains of Mexico to the frozen steppes of the Arctic circle and beyond, it is hardly necessary to remark that their national landed patrimony is immense, and contains within its perimeter the most varied stretches of land, under the most different climatic conditions, resulting in proportionately dissimilar natural productions. The boundless and too often dreary reaches of northern Canada and Alaska are their original habitat, and have remained the home of the greatest number of tribes. For this reason it behooves us to study with special care its real extent and

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<sup>1</sup> This is no doubt the equivalent of the word "English" in the estimation of the eastern Algonquins, whose language usually converts / into n.

boundaries. A reference to the few maps which bear on the subject will facilitate a clear understanding of the same.

The very first in chronological order to attempt an ethnographical survey of the Déné tribes is that of the explorer Sir A. Mackenzie, which was originally published in 1801. Though primarily intended to illustrate his discoveries along the noble stream which now bears his name, it shews with their proper habitats as many as seven distinct tribes, exclusive of the Chipewayans, among whom he had already resided for some time. Its counterpart, which accompanies the relation of his voyage to the Pacific Ocean in 1793, gives three more tribes, one of which, however, the so-called *Nagailer*, is not Déné. The two others, in common with another on the Mackenzie, he expressly designates by the generic name *Denee* added to the specific, or particular, cognomen of the tribe.

In 1820, Daniel W. Harmon, a trader in the employ of the fur company which first pushed its way to the west of the Rocky Mountains within British territory, published a valuable *Journal of Voyages*<sup>1</sup> wherein he detailed his own experiences among the western Dénés and other aborigines. To the volume he added a map of the best part of Canada from ocean to ocean, whereon he gives the habitat of five Déné tribes.

But these geographical sketches, which are little more than track surveys, do not pretend to delineate the limits of the entire stock as such. This was reserved for A. Gallatin. In 1836 he published the first map which ever aimed at representing the tribal subdivisions of all the then known linguistic families north of Mexico. The scantiness of the material then available, however, prevented him from furnishing us with more than mere outlines.

The same cannot be said of the beautiful work lithographed by J. Arrowsmith, which bears the title "Aboriginal Map of North America, denoting the Boundaries and the Locations of Various Indian Tribes". This illustrates the "Report from the Select Committee on the Hudson's Bay Company" published at London in the course of 1857. In view of its paramount importance to the ethnologist, I fail to understand why Maj. John W. Powell should have passed it unnoticed in his own invaluable paper, which was to establish the most authoritative classification of the aboriginal stocks within British North America and the United States. Not only does the Hudson's Bay Company map shew by special colourings the various linguistic families in common with Powell's work, but it improves on the latter by giving in their proper places the tribal divisions thereof.

It stands to reason, however, that ethnographical perfection is not to be expected from a class of people who were better acquainted with the differences between prime and common fur-skins than with the niceties of comparative philology. Yet, as far as the northern Dénés are concerned, their

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<sup>1</sup> A reprint of which was issued in New York three years ago.

habitat is fairly well explained on their map, considering, especially, the early date of its publication. Nay, the southeastern limits of their territory are thereon more accurately delineated than on Powell's map.

We will have occasion to point out its failings as regards some of the tribal divisions of the stock. Suffice it for the present to remark that the compilers sinned by extending the area occupied by that family down to the American boundary within what is now British Columbia, thereby englobing within one denomination, not only the Salish, but even such an evidently heterogeneous race as the Kutenay. The ethnic status of the native stocks west of the coast range of mountains — which, as usual at the time, was drawn too far inland — seems also more or less of a mystery to the cartographer. With the exception of the narrow strip of land projecting south of the main body of what was then Russian America, which is given to the Eskimos instead of the Tlinget or Kolloosh, all that region is represented as inhabited by people of Kollooshian parentage<sup>1</sup>, that is, from Vancouver Island inclusive, right to the delta of the Mackenzie. The southern Dénés, Navahoes and Apaches, are also sadly neglected in that work, though it locates the Comanches, which it calls Cumanchees.

Other maps, which, owing to their limitations, are only possessed of partial importance, are Fred. Whymper's (1868), E. Petitot's (1876), Tolmie and Dawson's (1884) and my own (1892) which point out the habitats respectively of the Yukon tribes, of those within the basin of the Mackenzie, of those throughout British Columbia and of the western Dénés.

### Powell's Map.

We now come to J. W. Powell's exhaustive monograph on the "Indian Linguistic Families of America north of Mexico" and accompanying map, which appeared in 1891 as part of the Seventh Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology, of Washington, D. C. From the responsible position of the author of both works<sup>2</sup>, no less than his own personal qualifications therefor and the very tone of his paper, it is evident that it was intended that report and map should be regarded as authoritative and final.

This object has, to a great extent, been accomplished. The thoroughness of the monograph and the minuteness of the information contained in the map certainly warranted a complete success. That very same year, the late Dr. D. G. Brinton did indeed publish a still more comprehensive work on "The American Race"<sup>3</sup>, which essayed a classification and description of all

<sup>1</sup> At that time the ethnic kinship of the Loucheux of Alaska with the Déné race had not been established. On the other hand, Fr. Petitot unaccountably confounds (*Monographie*, p. XIX) the Kolloosh or Tlinget with the Dénés.

<sup>2</sup> Who was then at the head of the Bureau of Ethnology, Washington.

<sup>3</sup> New York, 1891.

the aboriginal stocks of both Americas. But the very broadness of that book's scope and the lack of documents which can only be found in the archives of such an important institution as the Smithsonian, made it an utter impossibility for the learned ethnologist to do full justice in a single volume to such a vast subject.

As it is, Powell's effort is, and will probably remain for a long time to come, the most systematic and generally accurate nomenclature of the northern American linguistic families yet attempted. Barring the queerness of some of the names insisted on, it well deserves to be regarded as the great authority on the special field it covers.

Nevertheless, as regards the area occupied by the northern Dénés, some of that author's statements and the corresponding features of his map are certainly open to question, while a few more are altogether indefensible. Though fairly well versed in the literature touching on that race, the compiler does not seem to have ever heard of the Hudson's Bay Company's map of 1857, which would have spared him a regrettable error. Nor does he mention in his synonymy for the name of the stock such excellent authorities on its habitat, &c., as John McLean<sup>1</sup>, Sir John Richardson<sup>2</sup>, Lieut. W. H. Hooper<sup>3</sup>, Fred. Whymper<sup>4</sup>, Bishop Taché<sup>5</sup>, or even Father Petitot<sup>6</sup>, though they all wrote after 1836, the year which was chosen as the limit or starting point of the chronological period prior to which no works or authorities would be considered, without counting Capt. G. Back<sup>7</sup> and Dr. R. King<sup>8</sup>, whose respective works appeared in the course of that year.

Hence we must not wonder too much when we see in the extreme southeast a large tract of land which rightfully belongs to, and is occupied by, the Dénés handed over to the Algonquins. As a matter of fact, an area fully equal to five degrees of latitude by about ten of longitude is erroneously attributed to the latter immediately to the southeast of the mouth of Churchill River, a tributary of Hudson Bay. Not only Lakes Wollaston and Reindeer or Caribou, but even Isle-à-la-Crosse and Cold Lakes (55° N. lat.) lie within Déné territory.

On the lower Mackenzie, the Eskimo fishing grounds are also made by Powell's map to project considerably through a region which is in reality the

<sup>1</sup> "Notes of a Twenty-Five Years' Service in the Hudson's Bay Territory". 2 vols. London, 1849.

<sup>2</sup> "Arctic Searching Expedition", 2 vols. London, 1851.

<sup>3</sup> "Ten Months among the Tents of the Tuski". London, 1853.

<sup>4</sup> "Travel and Adventure in the Territory of Alaska". London, 1868.

<sup>5</sup> *Esquisse sur le Nord-Ouest de l'Amérique*. Paris, 1869.

<sup>6</sup> *Etude de la Nation Montagnaise*. Lyons, 1866; *Monographie des Déné-Dindjé*, Paris, 1876; On the Athabasca District, London, 1883, etc., etc.

<sup>7</sup> "Narrative of the Arctic Land Expedition to the Mouth of the Great Fish River". London, 1836.

<sup>8</sup> "Narrative of a Journey to the Shores of the Arctic Ocean". London, 1836.

property of the Dénés, the rightful line of demarcation between the two stocks running slightly further down than the first great bend in that stream as we ascend it from its delta, that is, above the confluence of Peel River, instead of south of Fort Good Hope, as the map would have it.

Nor is this all. North of the United States, the Dénés are eminently an inland race. Yet Powell's map assigns thereto sea littoral in four different places within Alaska, viz. Norton Sound, the mouth of the Kuskovim River, Cook's Inlet and Copper River.

There is not the shadow of a doubt that the entire coast of Norton Sound is peopled by Eskimo tribes. Whympfer's map, made after a personal exploration of that corner of America, plainly attributes to the Malemutes that very part of the sound littoral which Powell's grants to the Dénés. True, Whymper, who is more of an artist than of an ethnographer, calls them Malemute "Indians"; but the desinence of their name is by itself sufficient to betray their ethnological status, *-mute (myut)* being the Eskimo equivalent of the Déné *-o'tinne*, and the Salish *-muh*, all of which mean "people of".

Moreover, W. H. Dall, in whose company Whymper travelled, is quite clear on that point. Fort Unaklit, whence they started on their overland journey, is just at the mouth of the river of the same name. But he mentions "two assemblages of houses occupied by Innuit of the Káviat, Mählemut and Unaleet tribes"<sup>1</sup>. He then describes the sleds of the Eskimos, and, after one good day's travel from the coast, he arrives "at the first Indian village"<sup>2</sup>, which he says<sup>3</sup> is twenty-two miles in a straight line from the sea. Further on he gives a sketch of the "Innuit of Norton Sound"<sup>4</sup>, and declares that "it should be thoroughly and definitely understood that they are not Indians".

We may therefore well consider this point as settled. That Powell himself regards it in that light is evident from the fact that, in spite of the wrong impression conveyed by his map, he does not mention Norton Sound in his paper as one of the places where the Déné race reaches the coast.

The same conflict between map and report exists with regard to the ethnography of the mouth of the Kuskovim River, whose colouring proclaims it as glaringly Déné. We will just as easily dispose of that difficulty by stating that Latham includes within the area claimed by the Eskimos the lower part of that stream<sup>5</sup>. Indeed, he goes even too far in this respect, since

<sup>1</sup> "Travels on the Yukon and in the Yukon Territory". London reprint of 1898, p. 24.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31,

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 137.

<sup>5</sup> "The Native Races of the Russian Empire", p. 289. London, 1854.

he considers as belonging to that hyperborean family the "Inkalit"<sup>1</sup>, which is the westernmost Déné tribe, being apparently misled by the Eskimo name under which he finds it mentioned<sup>2</sup>.

As regards the two other points, Powell is more explicit. He expressly confirms in his report the readings of his map, saying: "Only in two places in Alaska do the Athapaskan tribes reach the coast — the K'naia-Khotana on Cook's Inlet, and the Ahtena on Copper River"<sup>3</sup>. We shall presently appreciate the appositeness of this declaration, which is no doubt based on Dall's description of the "Tribes of the Extreme Northwest", and possibly also on Latham's remark that "at Cook's Inlet the *original* Eskimo area ends, the occupancy now becoming Athabaskan"<sup>4</sup>.

In the first place, I confess that I would be more disposed to accept the latter statement were Latham's ideas in this particular less nebulous and his linguistic notions more accurate. He states a few pages further on that "to this section belong the Athabaskans of Cook's Inlet . . . They call themselves *Tnai*, or *Atna* = men; so that it is their Eskimo neighbours from whom we get the name Kenay"<sup>5</sup>. Now, I beg the reader to carefully note this: —

*Atna* is a Déné word which means foreigner, alien, and is used with slight dialectical inflections to designate all the native tribes which are *not* Déné, whether in the south or in the north. Thus the Shushwaps are *Atna* (*Ætna*) to the Carriers as well as the Tsimpsians of the Skeena River. Latham, with his usual linguistic acumen, partially realized this, without, however, grasping the real origin or meaning of the word, when he wrote: "There are several *Atna* populations, some closely, some distantly connected. One lies as far south as New Caledonia, and belongs to a different division of the great North American group from that to which we refer the Athabaskan *Atnas*"<sup>6</sup>.

The "Athabaskan *Atnas*"! *Risum teneatis, amici.* This sounds to a person familiar with the Déné dialects and nomenclature almost worse than English Turks, or Austrian Bantus! Let it be clearly understood once for all that

<sup>1</sup> Evidently the Ingalki of Dall and the Ingelete of Whymper. Their real aboriginal name and derivation will be found in our next chapter.

<sup>2</sup> A late traveller, Warburton Pike, fully corroborates Latham's opinion concerning the nationality of the inhabitants of the lower Kuskovim River. "The villages are built in the typical Innuit style", he writes . . . "Birch-bark canoes are entirely replaced by a great variety of models in walrus skin, from the great family boat in which the women, children and household goods travel from place to place, down to the little kayak, in which the *Innuit* hunter [italics mine] spends most of his existence during the summer months" ("Through the Subarctic Forest", p. 251, London, 1896). Everybody knows that Innuit is the name assumed by the Eskimos themselves.

<sup>3</sup> Seventh Ann. Rep. Bur. Ethnology, p. 53.

<sup>4</sup> "The Native Races of the Russian Empire", p. 289.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 291.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 291-92.

Atna, with or without the slight dialectical modification the word may receive (*CEtna*, *CEnna*, *'Qætnè*, etc.), is to the Dénés what *Barbaroi* was to the Greeks, Etruscans in particular and *Exteri* in general, to the Romans of old; what *Ayatšiwiyiniwok* is now to the Crees of the Canadian plains, *Chontalli* to the Nahua of Mexico, *Tapua* to the Tupi of South America, that is, a term denoting racial diversity and implying at the same time a sort of national repulsion or contempt on the part of the person making use of it<sup>1</sup>.

Therefore any American aborigines coterminous with the Dénés who may happen to be known under that name are thereby stamped as aliens, unless they be misnamed. In the latitude occupied by Latham's Atnas, and under the known geographical conditions of their habitat, the probability is that they are Eskimos.

The same argument disposes of the so-called Dénés of Copper River, since Latham calls them by the same name, saying that "we may talk of the Kenay Atnas and of the Copper River Atnas". He adds: "Both the Atnas under notice reach the sea"<sup>2</sup>, which is tantamount to saying: in both places the coast is inhabited by a non-Déné race.

### Discoverers and Authors on the Question.

This was no doubt the opinion of the late Dr. Brinton when he wrote that "the Innuit are at present essentially a maritime and arctic nation, occupying the coast and adjacent islands from the Straits of Belle Isle on the Atlantic to Icy Bay, at the foot of Mount St. Elias on the Pacific"<sup>3</sup>. Capitain F. W. Beechey, the arctic explorer, declares also that "these people [the Eskimos] inhabit the northwest coast of America, from 60° 34' N. to 71° 24' N."<sup>4</sup>. Neither author mentions any break in their territorial boundaries.

Nor does Sir John Richardson, who writes that they extend "along the north shore to Beering's Straits, which they pass, and follow the western coast, by *Cook's Sound* and Tchugatz Bay, nearly to Mount St. Elias"<sup>5</sup>. The italics are mine. Further on, relying on the accounts of navigators personally acquainted with the ethnology of the northwestern coast, he grows still more explicit, and writes: "The inhabitants of the north-western coasts from Tchugatsky Bay (or, as it is named in the English charts, Prince William's Sound) northwards, including the peninsula of Alaska and the islands in Beering's Sea and Straits, are considered by Baron Wrangell, Baér,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. my paper "Who are the Atnas?" in the "American Antiquarian", vol. XXIII, No. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Ubi supra*, p. 292.

<sup>3</sup> "The American Race", p. 59.

<sup>4</sup> "Narrative of a Voyage to the Pacific and Beering's Straits", vol. II, pp. 299-300. London, 1831. Eskimos have since been discovered near the eightieth degree of latitude N., and vestiges of their habitations still further north.

<sup>5</sup> "Arctic Searching Expedition", vol. I, p. 341.

and others acquainted with them, to be of the Eskimo stock"<sup>1</sup>. But Prince William's Sound is to the east of Cook's Inlet, and Cook's Inlet is implicitly comprised in this enumeration.

Nor will the strength of our conclusions be impaired if we turn to the travellers or skippers who first came in contact with these aborigines. The chronicler of Dixon's voyage in 1786 speaks of "Codiac Indians" they met there who "had frequently quarrelled and fought with the natives"<sup>2</sup>. Kodiaks could, without any difficulty, converse with Eskimos; how they could understand a single word of Déné, let alone *quarrel* with the people who speak it, I fail to discover.

Then again, as all along the coast, we see the heterogeneous race of that inlet acting as middlemen between the skippers and the Dénés. Dixon's narrative goes on to say: "Our friends . . . gave us to understand that their own furs were all sold, and that they were obliged to trade with tribes in distant parts of the country in order to supply us"<sup>3</sup>. This circumstance could by itself account for the "cloaks made of marmot skins" noticed as being plentiful among them. Marmots, except those of the smaller kind (*Arctomys monax*), are denizens of the mountains, where they burrow almost invariably above the timber limit. The use of their spoils would therefore seem to predicate a mountaineering race, such as the Eskimo at large has not been credited with being. But it so happens that we have the best of authorities in the late book of a man "who was there" for stating that, on the western coast of Alaska, "the ground-hog [to this day] supplies all the clothing, and, after the salmon run is over, every Inuit woman makes a summer's expedition to the nearest mountain range to snare ground-hogs for the yearly wants of her family"<sup>4</sup>.

Captain James Cook is the very first Englishman who met the natives of the inlet now called after him. He was a close observer, though no ethnologist. If at times he seems to differentiate them from the Eskimos, he thereby simply follows the practice of travellers speaking of aborigines whose racial identity they do not feel qualified to determine. It is but lately that the Aleuts, for instance, have been identified as Eskimos, and in common parlance their name has not, on that account, been modified in the least. The aborigines of Greenland, though generally known to be Eskimos, are none the less called Greenlanders.

Before we see what the famous navigator has to say of the natives of that coast, let the reader kindly bear in mind that the inhabitants of Prince William Sound are admitted by all to be Eskimos. Everybody is familiar with

<sup>1</sup> "Arctic Searching Expedition", vol. I, p. 362.

<sup>2</sup> "A Voyage round the World; but more particularly to the North-West Coast of America", p. 60. London, 1789.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>4</sup> "Through the Subarctic Forest", by W. Pike, p. 259.

the chief physical characteristics of that race: almost globular heads, flat noses, broad shoulders and rather short stature, in strong contrast to the oval facies with an aquiline nose of the Alaskan Dénés, who, as to size, are certainly much above the average height.

Here is what Cook says of the people he met in the inlet called after him: "These men in every respect resembled the people we had seen in Prince William Sound, as to their persons and dress"<sup>1</sup>. Now as to their goods: "Referring to Cook's River. About eight o'clock, we were visited by several of the natives, in one large and several small canoes<sup>2</sup>. The latter carried only one person each; and some had a paddle with a blade at each end after the manner of the Esquimaux. In the large canoes were men, women and children . . . I could observe no difference between the persons, dress, ornaments, and boats of these people and those of Prince William's Sound, except that the small canoes were rather of less size and carried only one man"<sup>3</sup>.

Who has not already recognized here the umiaks and the kayaks of the Eskimos with their well known double-bladed paddles? Let us now apply the test of language, that unerring criterion of ethnological certitude in America. Cook continues: "Their inclination led them especially to ask for large pieces of iron; which metal, if I was not much mistaken, they called by the name of *gonne*; though, like their neighbours in Prince William's Sound, they seemed to have many significations to one word. They evidently spoke the same language, as the words *keeta*, *naema*, *oonaka*, and a few others of the most common we heard in that sound were also frequently used by this new tribe"<sup>4</sup>.

I think I can now safely leave it to the reader to draw his own conclusions<sup>5</sup>.

### Real Boundaries.

On the other hand, Powell's map gives the Déné stock no footing on Hudson Bay, while the 1857 map of the fur traders grants it the littoral between Egg River and a point slightly to the north of Port Nelson. Father Legoff, a Catholic missionary who has passed over twenty years among the Dénés of the far east, writes also in the Introduction to his *Grammaire de la Langue Montagnaise*: "The Cariboo-Eaters people the environs of the large Lakes Cariboo, Axe and Brochet, east of L. Athabaska, and the steppes which

<sup>1</sup> "A Voyage to the Pacific Ocean", vol. III, p. 390. London, 1874. This volume was by Capt. Jas. King.

<sup>2</sup> Dixon complements this information by stating that both kinds were "covered with skins".

<sup>3</sup> "A Voyage to the Pacific Ocean", vol. II (by Cook himself), p. 392.

<sup>4</sup> *Id., ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Of course, the population may have changed within the last century; but this is hardly likely. See Appendix A, at the end of vol. I.

extend from these sheets of water to the land of the Eskimos in the north, and in the east as far as Hudson Bay"<sup>1</sup>. That this is no slip of the pen is made clear by the fact that Hearne expressly states that the country of the "Northern Indians" is bounded "by Hudson's Bay in the east<sup>2</sup>." Richardson similarly writes: "Other members of the Tinne nation inhabit the country at the mouth of the Missinipi [Churchill River], and carry their furs to Fort Churchill, where they meet the Eskimos that come from the north"<sup>3</sup>.

Having thus, to the best of our ability, cleared the ground from any possible objection to our general statement concerning the habitat of that great aboriginal family in the north, we may say that its ancestral domains extend: — in the far east, from Hudson Bay, their southern boundaries being the height of land between the Churchill and the Nelson Rivers, following the former in a southwestern direction until Cold Lake is taken in and passed by. Then, along the ridge dividing the basin of the Athabaska from that of the North Saskatchewan, where the line crosses the Rockies slightly north of Tête Jaune Cache. Thence it runs due south to a point between the head of the North Thompson and Quesnel Lake, whence it reaches the Fraser half-way between Alexandria and Soda Creek, on that stream, which then forms the eastern boundary of the stock as far as latitude N. 51° 30'. The Lillooet mountains in the south and the Coast range in the west then form its natural frontiers until the Territory of Alaska is in sight.

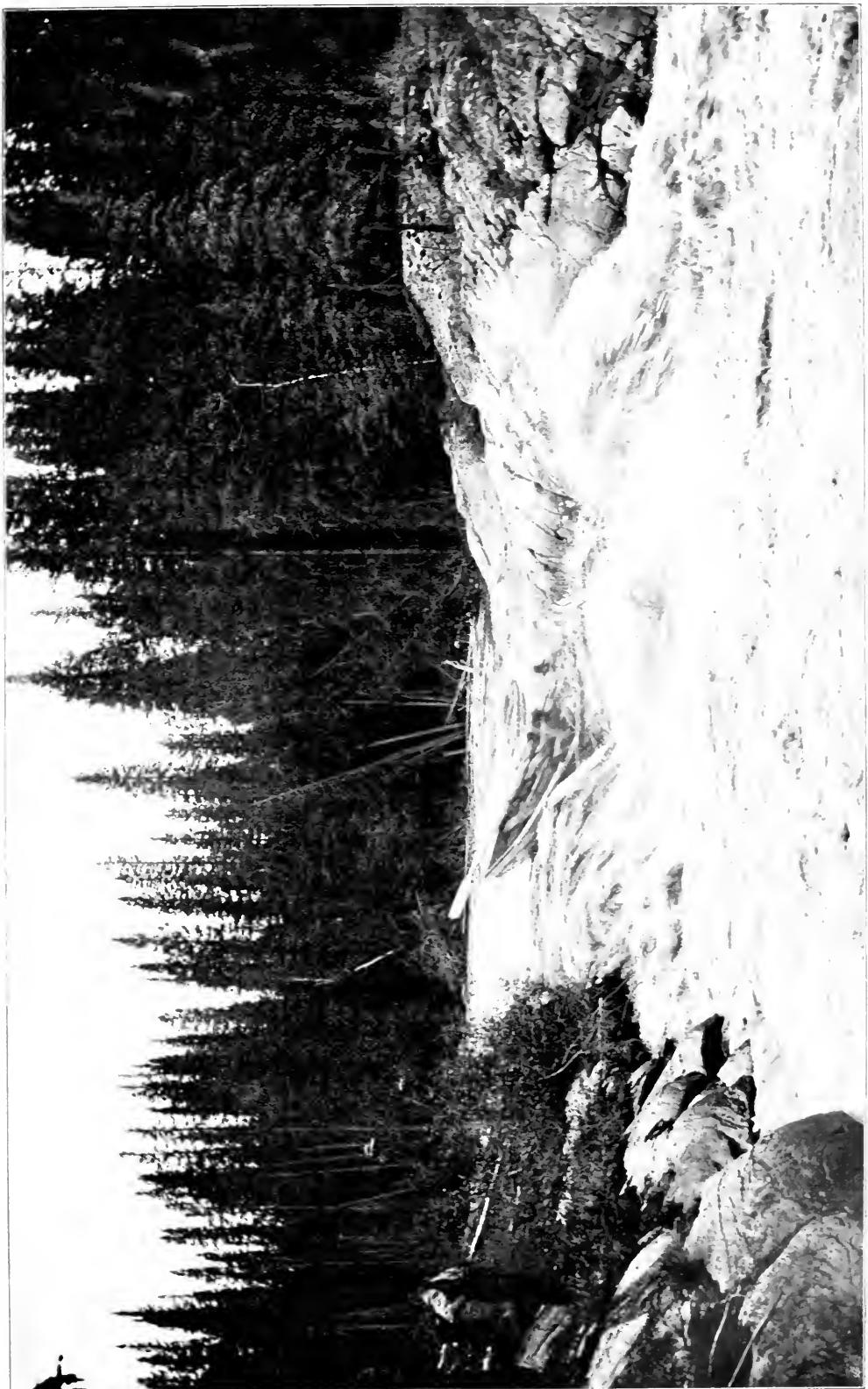
All the immense region to the north of that line, including the whole of Alaska, with the exception of a narrow strip of land on the sea coast occupied, first, by the Kwakiutl and the Bilqula, then by the Tsimsians, the Tlinget, and finally the Eskimos, until we revert to our original starting point at the mouth of Egg River, on Hudson Bay, is peopled in a way by Déné tribes. The British Isles, France, Spain and Portugal, Italy, Switzerland, Belgium, Denmark, Germany and Austria could easily be accommodated within that area, and still leave room for some of the southeastern European states.

And no wonder, since, by 120° of longitude west of Greenwich, the Dénés roam over a territory equal to some nineteen degrees of latitude, while, in its greatest breadth, the extent of the same is not less than sixty degrees of longitude, the whole without a break or the intrusion of any alien race. And yet this represents the habitat of only the northern half of the family. That of its southern members being mostly made up of disconnected parts of the United States, now much reduced in extent and converted into Government reservations, it is more logical to leave it to a subsequent chapter to detail its boundaries.

<sup>1</sup> P. 9. Montreal, 1899.

<sup>2</sup> "A Journey from Prince of Wales Fort", p. 327.

<sup>3</sup> "Arctic Searching Expedition", vol. II, p. 4.



A Trader's Scow shooting a Rapid (Smith Portage, Slave River.)



### Geographical Features.

As to the physical features of the northern land in general, it is but natural that most pronounced differences should result from such widely separated latitudes. The northernmost portion of it is, as a rule, as bleak, desolate and inhospitable as could be imagined. Almost immediately to the northwest of Fort Churchill, on Hudson Bay, and far into the interior, the eye wanders upon endless reaches of wastes silent as the grave, treeless as the great Canadian plains hundreds of miles away, but with no other soil than frozen mossy bogs, or barren tracts of land destitute of any vegetation save, here and there, a few scrubby bushes and, almost everywhere, monotonous beds of lichens. These are the well known Barren Grounds of Canada, the *Othel-néne*, or Broad Lands, of the natives.

Yet, while these apparently resourceless regions would certainly prove the death of the white man rash enough to venture through them alone, they are the granary or, if you will, the larder of the Déné huntsman, which a kind Providence keeps well filled with moving masses of reindeer, a noble animal which subsists mostly on the particular kind of lichen (*L. rangiferinus*) which nature does not grudge that unfruitful soil. There also, but generally north of the reindeer herds, are to be found, sedulously segregated from every other living creature, the musk ox (*Ovibos moschatus*), that delight of the naturalist, which is so much the more prized as it is the rarer. In fact, it has no other habitat on the whole surface of the globe.

Further west again, limitless forests of coniferous trees, interspersed with birch (*Betula papyracea*), aspen (*Populus tremuloides*), poplar or liard (*P. balsamea*) and the humbler willow (*Salix longifolia*), constitute the hunting ground of various tribes until 67° N. lat. is reached, where all important vegetation ceases again.

Within Alaska low mountains alternate with tundras, rolling plains covered with moss and more or less marshy, when primeval woods do not extend as far as the eye can reach. South of these we have the sombre forests and snow-capped mountains of northern British Columbia, famous among which is the Cariboo group, of golden fame.

The eastern and western Dénés are divided by the great orographic system of the American continent. I mean the Rocky Mountains (*Tsé-thi*, or Great Rocks) which, continuous in the south, except for a few gaps leaving passage to the Peace and Liard Rivers or without any stream of importance, become more or less broken as we go north, assuming at intervals an overlapping or echelon-like arrangement. This is, according to the Indians, the backbone of the earth. Besides the few special kinds of game to which the range affords excellent retreats, its main object, in the economy of nature, seems to be to feed with its eternal snows numberless rivers which water the country and drain the multitude of lakes which dot it on either side.

West of the Rockies these are simply submerged valleys between mountains. For that reason they are almost invariably much longer than wide and very deep. The most beautiful is Lake Stuart, the longest L. Babine (105 miles) and the deepest L. Morice (known maximum, 780 feet). Snowy slopes of a dazzling whiteness or emerald-like glaciers overhanging picturesque valleys, whence issue torrents with sonorous cascades, are common occurrences within that territory.

In the east lie the great lakes of the Canadian north: Athabaska (*Krei-thele-ké*, i. e. willow-floor in Déné), Great Slave Lake, an inland sea 336 miles long, which its inhabitants call *T'sù-thue*, or Breasts-Water, and Great Bear Lake (*Sa-tšo-thue*, Big-Bear-Water), an immense expanse of water and ice, near which the much missed J. Franklin dwelt for some time, in the course of one of those expeditions which preceded the fateful journey, wherein he ended in misery explorations which had long gladdened the heart of adventurous England.

The most important rivers on the same side of the mountains are the Liard, so called by the French Canadians for the abundance of balsam poplars on its banks, and which the Indians know as *Eret'qi-die*, or Strong Current River; Peace River, whose English name commemorates a lull after a series of wars. It rises, under the name of Finlay, west of the Rockies, which it crosses through a deep gorge, being then *Tšù-tši*, the Big Water, to the Sékanais, and becoming *Tsi-desse*, or Vermilion River, east of the main range. It is in reality nothing else than the headwaters of the great waterway of the north, the Mackenzie, which is generally known as *Naotša*, i. e. Gigantic Banks, to the Dénés who inhabit its basin.

The only stream which can be compared to it as far as importance and volume of water are concerned is the Yukon. I am much mistaken if this should not be spelt Yukhon, or in such a way as to indicate that the *k* sound is very guttural. At any rate this occurs in the terms for river in all the western Déné dialects, except the Nahanaïs. There is very little doubt that "river" is the meaning of that name. In the same way as primitive peoples are inclined to consider their own nationality as the very essence of mankind, even so is that apparent exclusiveness manifested in the naming of their chief stream. To them this is simply *the* river. This is the meaning of the word by which the Tsimpsians call the Skeena, *Ksièn*; of the *Kóoi* which the *Nla'ka'pamuh* or Thompson Indians apply to the Fraser; of the *Cita'tko* whereby the Shushwaps of Kamloops designate the Thompson River which flows by their reserve, etc.

A notable exception to this rule is the native name of the Fraser among the Déné tribes stationed on its banks. They uniformly call it *Ltha-khoh*, which means one river within another, perhaps owing to the importance of its main tributary, the Necho, which at its confluence appears to be quite as large as the Fraser itself. *Tacoutche-desse*, which Mackenzie took

to be the native name of the latter, is merely a hybrid word invented by his eastern companions. *Desse* means river in their dialect; *tche* (*tše*) is mouth of a stream with practically all the Dénés, and *Tacou* is evidently a corruption of the Carrier *Lthakhoh*.

Hundreds of miles to the east of either the Yukon or the Mackenzie flows the Coppermine, which is famous for having been the highway which led to the Arctic Ocean Samuel Hearne, the first representative of our race who ever reached its inhospitable shores, as George Back was, long after, to be for the desolate banks of the river, still further east, which now bears his name, though it is also known by the translation of the *Lue-tšo*<sup>1</sup>, Big-Fish i. e. Whale, of the Indians.

Sulphur was found by Franklin south of Lake Athabaska<sup>2</sup>, and a stream called Salt River denotes by its name the nature of the product it yields. West of the Rocky Mountains, the auriferous fields of the Klondike, Cassiar, Omineca and Cariboo are known the world over.

### Climate.

It is hardly necessary to remark that, in a region which is within or so near the Arctic circle, the winters are uncommonly severe. As far south as  $54^{\circ} 30'$ , I have myself seen the spirits in my thermometer fall to  $55^{\circ}$  below zero Fahrenheit, though Franklin reports being told that the lowest temperature experienced at Lake Athabaska was— $45^{\circ}$ <sup>3</sup>. His informants must certainly have been mistaken. In Alaska, the warm current from the coast of Japan considerably mitigates the inclemency of the cold season. Yet Dall records from personal observation as much as  $-69^{\circ}$ <sup>4</sup> which is, however, almost mild weather in comparison with the  $-82^{\circ}$  which, at this writing<sup>5</sup>, the newspapers assure us was lately the thermometric reading in the vicinity of Dawson City.

It would seem that, under such unfavourable conditions and in the absence of all the comforts of civilization, life is hardly worth living. However, there are few northerners who, after a visit to the land of their birth, the home of affluence if not of opulence, do not willingly return to the scenes of their many privations and sufferings in the subarctics, or, if definitely stationed under more favoured climes, do not pine after the long winters with their unavoidable concomitants, snow and cold and frost-bites which they have passed in the Land of Boreas.

Severe, indeed, are those seasons during which nature seems for seven, eight or nine months dead or slumbering under her mantle of dazzling white.

<sup>1</sup> Which the English Captain G. Back converted into Thlew-ee-choh.

<sup>2</sup> "Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea", vol. II, p. 7.

<sup>3</sup> *Id., ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>4</sup> "Travels on the Yukon", p. 105.

<sup>5</sup> January, 1906.

But then cold and frost are not without their advantages. They transform our great lakes into boundless plains, over which the native huntsman, tired of the hardships of forest travelling, hurries while sending forth the plaintive notes of his weird music, or his canine team gambols after the painful ascents and numberless difficulties attending land driving. They bridge over the rivers, preserve eatables from corruption and solidify liquids, so that they can be carried about with the greatest ease.

And then cannot the reader appreciate the beauty of those vast solitudes where man can so readily commune with his Creator, of those silent forests dressed in an immaculate garment over which the bright, if not very warm, rays of a March sun sprinkle myriads of the purest diamonds? Would he not feel the charm of those brief days when brilliant Sol receives a suite of two, four, or even eight satellites through the mysterious operations of the parhelia, or of those unending nights when nature seems at play, either encircling her silvery orb with a glorious halo, or displaying in the quiet heavens the wonders of the aurora borealis: now gigantic serpents that silently glide about through the sidereal spaces; then simply luminous rays that proceed from an unseen focus, to paint and stripe the huge dial over which revolves the tireless Great Bear, which plays for the child of the north the rôle of a never failing time-piece?

All these wonders, and many more, are the exclusive appanage of our high latitudes. They contribute towards making life bearable, nay agreeable, even to the exile from the land of smiling fields and sun-kissed meadows.

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## CHAPTER II.

**Distribution and Population of the Northern Dénés.****Population in General.**

If we take into consideration merely the seemingly boundless spaces occupied by the Northern Dénés, we shall no doubt expect to see their population numbered by the million. But a moment's reflection will remind us of the fact that such an inhospitable country as theirs cannot be supposed to support a populous nation. Indeed, the original inhabitants of the frozen American wastes are not so many thousands as, under more favoured climes, they might have been millions.

The Hudson's Bay Company's map of 1857 estimated at 35,000 the Dénés living on both sides of the Rocky Mountains within the British boundaries, and consequently exclusive of those in what is now Alaska. Since that time, they have constantly decreased, except where the action of the Catholic priest was sufficient to stay the march of the moral disorders and their baneful effects on the general health of the nation. But it is certain that, previous to the advent of the white traders among them, they were considerably more numerous than in 1857. Epidemics, brought on by those fore-runners of civilization, have infinitely more disastrous results among benighted savages, in their primitive state and ignorance of adequate sanitary measures, than the same would have amongst us. In fact, entire villages or bands of Indians are known to have been almost wiped out of existence by such unwelcome visitors as the small-pox, scarlet fever, measles and the grippe.

Thus, to mention but the earliest known of these fateful visitations, between 1771 and 1796, that is, between the writing of Hearne's Journal and the printing of the same, small-pox carried off *nine-tenths* of the eastern Dénés then known to the English so that the entire country was almost completely depopulated. Only a few fragments of tribes survived the ravages of the dread disease, which first attacked the Chippewayans. Thenceforth the explorer speaks of the natives he had known as "the few surviving Northern Indians", and "the few which remain of the Copper tribe"<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> "A Journey to the Northern Ocean", p. 178.

And then we may as well confess that, with the importation of fire-water and its unavoidable corollary, immorality, diseases have appeared among them which, in too many cases, undermine the constitution even of individuals who are not personally responsible for the same, and proportionately diminish the ratio of births by rendering some females sterile. Let us hasten, however, to remark that such cases are not to be found in all the tribes.

Even with their present thinned ranks, the Northern Dénés are still divided into many tribes, differentiated usually more by linguistic, than by sociological or other peculiarities. For the sake of clearness, we will class them into five groups, namely, from north to south: the Alaskans or Loucheux, the subarctic Dénés, the intermediate Dénés, and the western Dénés.

### The Loucheux and their Name.

By Loucheux is meant here that important division of the family better known in certain quarters by the name of Kutchin. To the world at large they might be chiefly remarkable as being the original possessors of the region where the gold mines of the Klondike have been discovered. They are the Quarrellers of Sir Alexander Mackenzie, and the name which I have myself constantly applied to them is that given them by the French Canadians and early fur traders. It means "cross-eyed", and refers to the many cases of strabism noticed among those who frequent the lower Mackenzie. As such it is a translation of the Chippewyan *Dekeze* or *Dakaze*, by which they are known in the northeast<sup>1</sup>.

This is evidently the epithet which Sir John Franklin aimed at rendering when he called them *Tykothe-Dinneh*<sup>2</sup>, thinking perhaps that he was thereby improving on the *Deguthee Denees* of Mackenzie<sup>3</sup>. The modern *Tukudh* of the Protestant missionaries, Bishop W. Bompas and the Rev. R. McDonald<sup>4</sup>, no less than W. H. Dall's own *Tukkuth*<sup>5</sup>, are nothing else than other transformations of the same aboriginal term by people whose mother tongue is chiefly remarkable for the vagueness and lack of precision of its phonetics.

As to *Kutchin* — the *Kutshin* of Latham, and the *Kootchi* of Richardson — that vocable is open to the same objections as *-tinne*. In the first place, it should be written *Kut'qin*, or in such a way as to express that lingual explosion which we have seen to be indispensable to the proper pronunciation of the would-be word *-tinne*. To be consequent with themselves, those who

<sup>1</sup> Etymology: *da* or *de*, eyes; *kaz* or *kez*, crooked . . . The suffix *e* or *i* is merely expletive, its rôle being to cement into one, as it were, the two compounding parts of the word. Latham calls the same Digothi ("The Ethnology of the British Colonies", p. 241).

<sup>2</sup> "Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea", vol. III, p. 52.

<sup>3</sup> "Voyages to the Frozen and Pacific Oceans", vol. I, p. 254, Toronto reprint.

<sup>4</sup> "Bibliography of the Athapaskan Languages", *passim*.

<sup>5</sup> "Tribes of the Extreme Northwest", p. 31. Contr. Am. Ethnol., vol. 1.

speak of the Kutchin should call the Dénés, not Tinne or Athapaskans, but Kwotin, Hwoten or Hwotchen. These are, in the dialects wherefrom *-tinne* has been borrowed, the exact equivalents of the verbal desinence *-kutchin*, all of which should be spelt with diacritical marks or the apostrophe denotive of the all-important "click".

The "exploded" *t* of most of the dialects is convertible into *t'q*<sup>1</sup> in the idiomis of several tribes. For instance, where the Carrier Indians say *-hwo'tenne*, the Sékanais have it *-hwot'qenne*. The syllables *-hwo-*, *-kwo-* and *-ku-* simply intimate that some reference is intended to space or a particular place. An example taken from home will render my meaning clearer. As there is no common or latin *r* in the quasi totality of the Déné dialects, Paris is to our people Palis. Therefore Paris-ian will be Palis-*hwo'ten* to a Carrier, Palis-*hwo'tin* to a Babine, Palis-*kwo'tin* to a Chilcotin, Palis-*hwo'qen* to a Sékanais, and Palis-*kut'qin* to a Loucheux. All these pretended nouns, if used separately, are simply as many verbs meaning exactly: "he inhabits", and nothing more.

### Habitat of the Loucheux.

Coming now to the habitat of the Loucheux, we may state that, after the Eskimos, they are the most northerly people in America. Their territory extends from Anderson River, in the east, to the western extremity of Alaska, leaving always, as we have seen, the coast to the Eskimos. The whole interior of that immense peninsula, as well as much of what is now called the Yukon Territory, belongs to them. Their southern frontier east of the Rocky Mountains is now the 67th degree of latitude or thereabouts, as they have long ceased to trade at Fort Good Hope<sup>2</sup>, slightly north of 66° lat., which is still locally known as the *Fort des Loucheux*. They now resort to Fort McPherson, on Peel River, instead. West of the Rockies their hunting grounds extend somewhat more to the south, as we shall see presently.

It is certainly no easy task to unravel the maze of inaccuracies and contradictions which ignorance or carelessness has woven around the entire

<sup>1</sup> Here is the value of the letters such as used to express native words in the course of the present work. The vowels are as in Italian; *é* has the sound of *e* in the French *mets* and *é* that of *e* in the English "ten", while *æ* corresponds to the *e* of such French words as *je*, *te*, *le*. *W* is always a consonant. Except in the following cases, the consonants have invariably the continental sounds: — *H* is strongly aspirated; *n* represents the nasal sound; *t* is a lingualo-sibilant *t*; *r* is the result of uvular vibrations, the *r* *grasseillé* of southern Frenchmen; *kh* and *rh* are strongly guttural; *th* is simply *t* plus *h*; *ſ* represents the English consonant *sh*; *q* nearly equals *ty*, both letters being sounded simultaneously as so many consonants; *ſ* and *z* are intermediate between *s* and the hard English *th*, and *z* and the soft English *th* respectively. The apostrophe denotes the lingual explosion, which one must hear to understand properly; and the upper period (·) represents the hiatus.

<sup>2</sup> As they did in Franklin's time, *op. suprà cit.*, vol. III, p. 53.

group of the Loucheux tribes. To accomplish a classification based on an actual ethnological basis, we must have recourse to an eclectic process, whereby all second-hand information shall be, as far as practicable, relegated to the back-ground.

No less than five different authors furnish us with lists, partial or supposedly complete, of the tribal divisions of that group, and hardly two of them agree as to the names or the number of the same. Following the chronological order, we find that Sir John Richardson gives us<sup>1</sup> no less than fourteen tribes; Fred. Whymper enumerates only eight in his book<sup>2</sup> for the same area, though he names ten on his map of the Yukon; W. H. Dall in one of his works<sup>3</sup> locates nine within Alaska, while in his "Tribes of the Extreme Northwest"<sup>4</sup> he counts no less than thirteen, one of which he further subdivides into six<sup>5</sup>; E. Petitot mentions<sup>6</sup> thirteen on either side of the Rocky Mountains, and Prof. Otis T. Mason, of the Smithsonian Institution, quotes<sup>7</sup> a brief list of seven so-called tribes, to which we should add three others whose habitat, though not determined any more precisely than by the caption "Western Tinneh", must evidently be ascribed to the Territory of Alaska<sup>8</sup>.

Prof. Mason's nomenclature is merely a *résumé* of Dall's. It must therefore be eliminated from our review of the northwestern tribes. On the other hand, Richardson admits that he owes to a third party most of his information on the same. But as his authorities, an old Hudson's Bay Company trader and J. Bell, the first white man who ever penetrated into Alaska from the east, were presumably familiar with the tribes they enumerated, his data must occasionally be useful to help us solve problems created, or left unanswered, by others. As to Father Petitot, though he did cross the Rocky Mountains into the Yukon, he never went so far as Alaska. Then Dall and Whymper personally explored together the Yukon basin as far as the confluence of the Porcupine River, whence they sent up a scouting party to reconnoitre

<sup>1</sup> "Arctic Searching Expedition", vol. I, p. 397 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> "Travel and Adventure in the Territory of Alaska", *passim*.

<sup>3</sup> "Travels on the Yukon", *passim*.

<sup>4</sup> Contr. to N. A. Ethnol. vol. I.

<sup>5</sup> pp. 32-33. The habitat of that tribe, the Nahanaïs, is not in Alaska.

<sup>6</sup> *Monographie des Déné-Dindjié*, p. XX.

<sup>7</sup> Smithsonian Report for 1885, p. 832.

<sup>8</sup> These are the tribes which I declared in 1889 ("The Western Dénés", p. 110) to "have no existence but on paper". As an excuse for that mistake I must say that those tribes were given simply as "Western Tinneh", and without a word of explanation as to their habitat. I was then studying what I called the Western Dénés, and was already conversant with two of their dialects. This knowledge made me sure, through the medium of Indians whom I could not misunderstand, that there were no such tribes within hundreds of miles of my place of residence *west* of the Rocky Mountains. Hence my remark. A single mention of Alaska by the side of the names of those tribes would have prevented it.



Kutchin Winter Lodges.



the country. We have therefore no alternative left us but to classify the Alaskan tribes mostly after Dall and Whymper, leaving it to Petiot to complete the description by his enumeration of the Canadian Loucheux.

### Distribution of the Loucheux Tribes.

This gives us the following results<sup>1</sup>:

1st. *Kaiyuh-kho'-tenne*, "people of the Willow River", which name Dall translates, perhaps from a surmise based on the nature of their habitat, "people of the lowlands"<sup>2</sup>. They are the westernmost representatives of the Déné race, and there is a strong presumption that especially among those in touch with the Eskimos of Norton Sound, there is more or less alien blood in their veins. Dall calls them Ingalik, Whymper Ingelete, and Latham Ankalit, different spellings which are as many attempts at rendering the Eskimo name they bear on Norton Sound. They are represented as an indolent set of people living mostly on fish, which they procure with a minimum of exertion. In 1876 their numbers were estimated at about 2000.

According to Dall, they extend "from near Kollmakoff Redoubt on the Kuskokwim River to its headwaters, on the Yukon above the mission on the left and above the Anvil River on the right bank, west to the Anvil River and Iktig'alik on the Ulukak River, north to Nulato, and east to the mountains or the Kuskokwim River"<sup>3</sup>. In a word, they are the natives of the Lower Yukon. Away on the left bank of that stream and opposite to the land of the lower "Ingalit", are what Whymper's map calls the *T'kitske* Indians, perhaps the *Tset'qie-zidie* (people sitting in the water) of Petiot. But their tribal autonomy is more than doubtful, and they are probably merely a branch of the *'Kaiyuh-kho'-tenne*.

2nd. Further up the river, mostly on its northern bank and on the Koyukuk River, are the Koyukons of Dall (*Koyū-kūkh-otā'nā* of his later works), whom his English companion calls Co-Yukons, a more manly and rather turbulent tribe whose bloody deeds we shall have to record. In his first work on the Yukon, Dall says unblushingly that disease and the scarcity of food having "fortunately" reduced their numbers, they could, in 1868, hardly muster more than two hundred families<sup>4</sup>, which would mean some 900 souls. But in 1876 the same author estimated them at only 500<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> For the sake of clearness and uniformity, I have followed in the transcription of the following and all other aboriginal terms the rules proper to my own graphic system. See p. 23, note 1.

<sup>2</sup> "Travels on the Yukon", p. 28.

<sup>3</sup> "Tribes of the Extreme Northwest", p. 26.

<sup>4</sup> "Travels on the Yukon", p. 28.

<sup>5</sup> "Tribes of the Extreme Northwest", p. 39.

Henry W. Elliott, an official of the United States, erroneously classed as Eskimos — or rather Kodiaks, as he would have it — these two tribes, which he calls Ingaleeks and Koyoukons respectively<sup>1</sup>.

3rd. Still higher up, but on the left side of the great Alaskan stream, as far up as the Tanana River, is a tribe called on Whymper's map by the evidently Eskimo term "Newicargut". By the Dénés of the lower Yukon they are known as *Yuna-kho'-tenne*, a word which Dall translates "distant" or "far off people". By the change of a single vowel we would have *Yunu-kho'-tenne*, which is a regular Carrier or western Déné word meaning exactly "people far off up the river", and I have no doubt this is the real signification of the tribal name<sup>2</sup>.

4th. Then come the well identified *Gens des Buttes* of the Canadian employees of the fur trading companies. They are the *Tana-kut'qin*, or mountain people, the *Tenăñ'-kütchin'* of Dall, the *Tanana* Indians of Whymper, and the *Tanna-kutchi* of Richardson, who translates their name "people of the bluffs" and estimates them at 100 hunters, making at least 450 souls. They are a wild and rather dreaded horde of savages, whose habitat is mostly on the left bank of the Yukon, up the river called after them. To-day they scarcely number 400.

Above the Ramparts Rapids in the former stream Whymper locates, on the right side thereof, what he calls *Gens du Milieu*, a tribe which he says is nearly extinct. Richardson thinks he gives its aboriginal name when he dubs it *Zi-unka-kutchi*. In his time it still numbered 20 hunters. Late information points to the complete extinction of that tribe, as a result of a visitation by an epidemic of scarlet fever.

5th. At the confluence of the Porcupine with the great waterway of Alaska was Fort Yukon, in the vicinity of which dwelt, on the lowlands of the former, the *Kut'qa-kut'qin*, or "people who are against" (i. e. act differently from others), a fine race of men, whom the explorers represent as very fond of beadwork and rather particular concerning their personal appearance. In Richardson's time they were scarcely 450 souls, who now seem to have dwindled down to some 250. Dall erroneously translates their name "Lowlanders", exactly as that of the westernmost tribe, being apparently led astray in both cases by the natural features of their habitat. The hunting grounds of the *Kut'qa-kut'qin* lie on both banks of the Yukon, from Birch River, slightly below the site of Fort Yukon, up to the Kotlo and Porcupine Rivers.

6th. From the Porcupine River, near old Fort Yukon nor to the Romanoff mountains, are to be found the *Gens du Large* of the French Canadians, the *Natche-kütchin'* of Dall, who later on called them *Nāt'sit-küt-*

<sup>1</sup> "A Report upon the Condition of Affairs in the Territory of Alaska", p. 29. Washington, 1875.

<sup>2</sup> Analysis of the word: *Yu*, far off; *nu*, upstream; *kho* (the usual inflection of *khoh* in compounds), river; *'tenne*, people of.

*chin'*, a nomadic band which may number 150 souls. East of this tribe, and south of the Eskimos of the arctic shores, are:

7th. The *Vœn-kut'qin* or people of the lakes, the Rat Indians of the traders, the *Vūntā'-kūtchin* of Dall, and the *Vanta-kutchi* of Richardson, who estimates their population at 400. With his usual ill-luck with etymologies, Dall says that their name means "rat people"<sup>1</sup>, and he is also mistaken when he identifies them with the Loucheux of the H. B. Co. voyageurs. This designation applies to his so-called

8th. *Täkküth-kütchin'*, Petitot's *Tdha-kké-kuttchin*, the identical tribe whose members are known as Dakaze, "cross-eyed" by the eastern Dénés. They are therefore the prototype of the whole group, and their habitat extends between the headwaters of the Porcupine and Fort McPherson. *Täkküth* is intended by the Anglo-Saxon writer as an equivalent for *Dakaz*, or *Takaz*. But, as this term is not expressive of a locality, it is little short of absurd to couple it with the locative desinence *-kut'qin*.

9th. Above the Kotlo River roam, on both banks of the Yukon, the *Han-kut'qin*, or "river people (Petitot), wood people (Dall)", a small tribe locally known as *Gens des Bois*. If the H. B. Co. map were to be trusted, they should be considered as the most southern of all the Loucheux tribes. But this cannot be the case, since, further up the Yukon, are

10th. The *Tützone-kut'qin*, or Crow People, the *Gens des Foux* of the Canadians according to the English writers<sup>2</sup>, and the *Tathzey-kutchi* of Richardson, who estimates them at 230 hunters, or about 1100 individuals divided into four bands. The same author says that "they inhabit a wide country, which extends from the sources of the Porcupine and Peel to that of the River of the Mountain Men"<sup>3</sup>, whereby he undoubtedly means the Liard. According to Dall, the exact limits of their habitat on the Yukon are from Deer River nearly to the site of Fort Selkirk, taking in its northern tributaries and the basin of the White River.

The Klondike gold fields are situated partly within the territory of that tribe and partly within that of the *Gens des Foux*. Dawson City is built nearly on the line of demarcation between the two tribes' lands.

11th. Between the upper branches of the Yukon and a short distance from the Pacific Coast is, according to Richardson, Petitot and the old maps, the territory of the *Artez-kut'qin*, a name which seems Déné only in its second half. The former author translates it "tough and hard people", which is evidently more of an explanation than of a translation. He also puts down their population at about 500 individuals. They are, no doubt, the *Tehänin-*

<sup>1</sup> "Tribes of the Extreme Northwest", p. 31. *Dzén-thét-kut'qin* would signify exactly people among the rats, or rat people in Loucheux. *Vœn* is the equivalent of the Sékanais *Mén* (*m=v*), which means lake.

<sup>2</sup> Who probably spell thereby *Gens des Feux* as they pronounce it themselves.

<sup>3</sup> "Arctic Searching Expedition", vol. I, p. 398.

*küt-chin'* of Dall, according to whom they muster 1000 souls. This figure probably includes the coterminous coast people, whom the American writer believes to be Déné.

12th. In the east are, on Peel River, the *Thét'tét-kut'qin*, about whom little seems to be known; and still further east

13th. The *Nakotšo-ondjig-kut'qin*, or people of the Mackenzie. Their name connotes their habitat. They are the tribe met by Mackenzie, and nicknamed by him Quarrellers, because of their differences with their northern neighbours, the Eskimos.

14th. Finally, we have, according to Petitot, the *Kwit'qa-kut'qin*<sup>1</sup>, who inhabit the dreary steppes of the Arctic Ocean, *minus* a narrow strip of land along the coast, between the Mackenzie and the Anderson Rivers.

The total population of the Loucheux group must be very nearly 5,500 souls. In 1851 Richardson reported it as containing about 1,000 hunters, though his informants were not acquainted with the tribes on the lower Yukon, which, as we have seen, are the most populous of all the Alaskan divisions.

Sir A. Mackenzie is the first author who ever mentioned them. Through the eastern tribes he heard of the Yukon, which he took for Cook's River. He was told of their kinsmen in the far west who were, the natives assured him, of a gigantic stature, very wicked and visited by "canoes of very large dimensions"<sup>2</sup>, manifestly Russian, English and French vessels in search of furs.

### The Subarctic Dénés.

The group of the Subarctic Dénés is composed of the following tribes:

15th. The Hares (*Déné*), whom the French call *Peaux-de-Lièvre*, a name which J. McLean translates literally Rabbitskins. They share with the Loucheux the distinction of being the northernmost Indians in America. They are arctic as well as subarctic aborigines, their habitat extending from Fort Norman on the Mackenzie, west of Great Bear Lake, to the confines of the Eskimos, not far from the frozen ocean. According to Petitot<sup>3</sup>, they are divided into five bands or subtribes, namely: the *Nni-o'tinne*, or people of the moss, who dwell on the outlet of Great Bear Lake; the *Kra-tha-go'tinne*, people among the hares, who roam along the same stream; the *Kra-tšo-go'tinne*, people of the big hares, whose hunting grounds are inland, between the

<sup>1</sup> This name is evidently the same as that of tribe No. 5; but, while the same tribal division is often known by different names according to the location or the relation of the speaker thereto, it also happens that two tribes are called alike by outsiders, owing to the analogy of the particularities responsible for the name of either. Petitot is too familiar with the eastern tribes to have erred in this case.

<sup>2</sup> "Voyages from Montreal", vol. I, p. 297.

<sup>3</sup> *Monographie des Déné-Dindjié*, p. XX.

Mackenzie and as far towards the coast of the Arctic Ocean as the Eskimos will let them go; the *Sa-tšo-thu-go'tinne*, people of Great Bear Lake, whose name betrays the habitat, and lastly the *Nne-la-go'tinne*, people of the end of the world, who are coterminous with the Eskimos. Petitot calls them Bâtards Loucheux, a designation which seems suggestive of mixed blood.

The Hare Indians do not number more than 600 souls. They are a timidous and kindly disposed set of people, whose innate gentleness long made them and their hunting grounds, bleak and desolate as they are, a fair field for exploitation by their bolder neighbours in the west and the southeast. Yet their medicine-men or shamans were formerly feared and famous for the effectiveness of their ministrations and the wonderfulness of their tricks. They are the *Ka-cho'-dtinne* of Richardson, and owe their tribal name some say to their natural timidity, others, apparently with more reason, to the large number of arctic hares (*Lepus timidus arcticus*) found in their primeval forests. The Hares, as a tribe, are *Kancho*, or "Big Arms" (!) to Latham<sup>1</sup>.

16th. Similar to the Hares as regards peaceful dispositions are the Dog-Ribs (*Duné*), the *Plats-Côtés-de-Chien* or *Flancs-de-Chien* of the French Canadians, who translate by this rather unflattering epithet the name, *Lintcanre*, given them by their cogenereous neighbours, a nickname which Franklin spells *Thlingcha-dinneh*. They form the only Déné tribe which A. Dobbs called by its specific name as early as 1744. Of the *Plascotez de Chiens* the old author very considerately wrote: "This Nation has a sweet, humane Aspect, but their Country is not good. They have no beaver, but live by Fishing, and a kind of Deer they call Cariboux (Rein-Deer). The Hares grow white in Winter"<sup>2</sup>.

According to a tradition current among them, their first ancestor was a big dog: hence the tribal appellation. Petitot says of them that *ils sont tous bégues*, "they all stutter". For some time I thought this might have been a careless use of words on the part of the learned author, who I supposed must have meant that they all *lisp*. But, as he has consigned that identical statement in two of his publications<sup>3</sup>, once very emphatically, we have no choice but to take his words with their obvious import. Cases of Babines who cannot pronounce the *s* sound and invariably transform it into an English *sh* are frequent in the west.

Be this as it may, the habitat of the Dog-Ribs is a stretch of land between Great Slave and Great Bear Lakes, and to the east of the latter as far as the basin of the Coppermine River, according to Petitot<sup>4</sup>, while Richardson

<sup>1</sup> "The Ethnology of the British Colonies", p. 226.

<sup>2</sup> "An Account of the Countries Adjoining to Hudson's Bay", p. 19. London, 1744.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, *ibid.*, and *Mémoire abrégé sur la Géog. de L'Athabaskaw-Mackenzie*, p. 246. Richardson has the following remark on this subject: "A Dog-rib or Athabaskan appears, to one unaccustomed to hear the language, to be stuttering" ("Arctic Searching Expedition", vol. II, p. 28).

<sup>4</sup> *Monographie*, p. XX.

extends it, not unreasonably it would seem, as far as the Great Fish or Back River<sup>1</sup>. In support of this last surmise, it is only necessary to remark that they form the most northeastern of all the Déné tribes, and that, from Back's account of this part of the country, not only did they formerly frequent the banks of that stream, but they even occasionally went as far as the mouth of the same in their war excursions against the Eskimos<sup>2</sup>. They aggregate some 1.150 souls forming three subdivisions: the *Lintcanre* of Fort Rae, the *Thakfwel-o'tinne*, and the *Tsé-o'tinne*, or rock people.

The explorer Thomas Simpson calls them a kind, inoffensive people, and adds: "I noticed some fine faces among the younger men; and the women, though not so good-looking, have an affectionate and pleasing address"<sup>3</sup>.

17th. Then we have the Slaves (*Déné*) who, to the number of 1.100 individuals or thereabouts, inhabit the forests to the west of Great Slave Lake, from Hay River inclusive; then along the Mackenzie from Fort Simpson to Fort Norman. They are subdivided into five bands, according to the location of their trade. These are the subtribes of Hay River, Trout Lake, Horn Mountain, the forks of the Mackenzie, and Fort Norman. Als late as 1849 J. McLean wrote that they mustered "between sixty and eighty men able to bear arms"<sup>4</sup>.

Franklin does not differentiate the Slaves from the Dog-Ribs. He therefore takes the Horn Mountain Indians to belong to the latter tribe, and says that, in his time (1829), they mustered alone about 200 hunters<sup>5</sup>. According to Mackenzie the Slaves were driven from their original home in the south to the river that now bears their name, by the Crees, their hereditary enemies<sup>6</sup>. Their great timidity is responsible for their distinctive name, though Hooper attributes it to the heavy loads their women are made to carry<sup>7</sup>.

18th. The Yellow-Knives, who call themselves *Déné*, are known to most of their congeners as *Thatsan-o'tinne*. They are the Copper Indians of Hearne and the majority of the early English writers, the Red-Knives of Mackenzie and Franklin<sup>8</sup>. The latter, who writes their name *Tantsawhot-dinneh*, fancifully enough translates it Birch-rind Indians. He adds that, "according to their own account, [they] inhabited the south side of Great Slave Lake at no very distant period"<sup>9</sup>. Their population is not far from 500, though Franklin esti-

<sup>1</sup> *Ubi suprà*, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> "Narrative of the Arctic Land Expedition", by Capt. Back, p. 198.

<sup>3</sup> "Narrative of the Discoveries on the North Coast of America", p. 92. London, 1843.

<sup>4</sup> "Notes of a Twenty-Five Years' Service", vol. III, p. 256.

<sup>5</sup> "Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea", vol. III, p. 51.

<sup>6</sup> "Voyage through the Continent of North America", vol. I, p. 195.

<sup>7</sup> "Ten Months among the Tents of the Tuski", p. 303. London, 1853.

<sup>8</sup> It is not a little strange that the H. B. Co. map of 1857 should split the tribe in two, as if to please both the English explorers and the French voyageurs. While it attributes the southeast of Great Bear Lake to the "Copper" Indians, it reserves the northeast of Great Slave Lake for the "Yellow-Knife" Indians.

<sup>9</sup> *Ubi suprà*, p. 43.

mated it at only 190, thereby probably taking into consideration only one of their bands<sup>1</sup>.

They now hunt on the dreary steppes lying to the north of Great Slave Lake. But when first met by the whites, they frequented more usually the banks of the Coppermine River to the north of their present habitat. They were then a bold, unscrupulous and rather licentious tribe, whose members too often took advantage of the gentleness of their neighbours to commit acts of high-handedness which, as we shall see in its proper place, finally brought down on them what we cannot help calling just retribution.

Their name is derived from the native copper out of which they formerly manufactured, and sold at fabulous prices, knives, axes and other cutting tools. The metal was found on a low mountain in the vicinity of the river called after it Coppermine by the traders on Hudson Bay, whose minds were long exercised over the ridiculously exaggerated commercial possibilities which the supply of the ore might hold in store for them<sup>2</sup>. The diffusion of iron and steel implements at length so depreciated the value of the aboriginal wares that, finding the main source of their revenue cut off through the new order of things, they finally moved to the south.

### Athabaskans or Eastern Dénés.

We now come to the easternmost group of Dénés, the very first which came in contact with representatives of our civilization. It is composed of only three tribes, the Cariboo-Eaters, the Athabaskans proper, and the Chippewayans.

19th. The Cariboo-Eaters, who, as usual, call themselves *Déné*, but are known to their neighbours ad *Ełṣèn-eldeli*, or meat-eaters, are from the viewpoint of the linguist closely related to the Yellow-Knives. They are 1,700 strong, and hunt in the vicinity of Lakes Cariboo or Reindeer, Axe, and Brochet, east of Lake Athabaska, as well as on the barren grounds which extend therefrom to the north as far as the land of the Eskimos, and in the east as far as Hudson Bay.

20th. The Athabaskans (*Déné* to themselves, '*Kreythele'ké-o'tinne*, "people on the willow floor", to others) have for habitat Lake Athabaska, the basin of Slave River and the outlying lands to the east of Great Slave Lake. Together with the next tribe, they form a population comprising close upon 4,000 souls.

21st. These are the now historic Chippewayans (*Déné*), a name which was originally applied to several other cognate tribes by writers little conversant with the distribution of the Dénés. It is derived from two Cree words,

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. "Report from the Committee appointed to enquire into the State and Condition of the Countries adjoining to Hudson's Bay". London, 1749.

*chipwaw*, pointed, and *weyan*, skin, blanket, or garment, by allusion to the original form of the main article in the dress of the natives so denominated<sup>1</sup>. The French have always called this and the preceding tribe *Montagnais*, by analogy with a nation of the same name, but of Algonquian parentage, which the first servants of the fur trading companies had known in eastern Canada.

Reverting to the word by which the last two tribes are known to the English speaking world, this furnishes us with a striking example of the many transformations which a foreign term may undergo under the pen of writers whose mother tongue is noted for the looseness of its orthography. Thus, while in 1819 Dr. McKeevor called these aborigines *Oochepayyans*<sup>2</sup>, whom Mackenzie had first designated as *Chepewyans* (as also did Richardson later on), the spelling of their name has since fluctuated between *Chipwyans* (J. West<sup>3</sup>), *Chipewyans* (Franklin, Back, Simpson), *Chepeyans* (Pritchard), *Chipwayans* and *Chippawians* (McDonald<sup>4</sup>), *Chippewyans* (Hale), *Tchippeyeyans* (Taché), *Chippeweyans* (Legoff), and *Chippewyans* (Tyrrell<sup>5</sup>).

The habitat of the Chippewayans proper is Lakes Cold, Isle-à-la-Crosse and Heart; the height of land in the vicinity of Methy Portage, and along English River.

The immense tracts of barren grounds immediately to the northwest of Hudson Bay are the common property of the coterminous tribes, Chippewayans, Atiabaskans, Cariboo-Eaters, Yellow-Knives etc., whose members occasionally repair thither, or, to be precise, to the part thereof adjoining their respective habitats. Richardson describes accurately the nature of their "population" when he writes that "they are very thinly peopled, and rather by isolated families who resort thither for a year or two to hunt the reindeer than by parties associated in such numbers as to deserve the name of a tribe. Part of these wandering, solitary people resort at intervals of two or three years to Churchill for supplies, and part to Fort Chepewyan, where from the direction in which they came, they are named *Sa-i-sa-'dtinnè* [*Sa-is'a'-tinne*], eastern or rising sun folks"<sup>6</sup>. These isolated bands add by no means to the population just enumerated, and my object in quoting Richardson is exclusively to give an adequate reason for the migratory habits of the tribes. Twenty years before, the barren grounds were more generally frequented, as Franklin

<sup>1</sup> *Esquisse sur le Nord-Ouest*, by Bishop Taché, p. 102 (2nd edition). Richardson, who is decidedly infelicitous in his etymologies, sees in it a term of contempt, in fact, nothing less than a corruption of the exclamation *Chi-pai-uk'-tim* "you dead dog!" in Cree ("Arctic Search. Exped.", vol. II, p. 5).

<sup>2</sup> "A Voyage to Hudson's Bay", p. 74.

<sup>3</sup> "The Substance of a Journal during a Residence at the Red River Colony". London, 1824.

<sup>4</sup> "Peace River". Ottawa, 1872.

<sup>5</sup> "Across the Sub-Arctics of Canada". Toronto, 1897.

<sup>6</sup> "Arctic Searching Expedition", vol. II, pp. 4—5. Latham, who calls them *Si-tsawdinni*, erroneously makes of them a regular tribe, the first of his Athabaskan divisions ("The Ethnol. Brit. Colonies", p. 225).



Douply "Carriers".



records the fact that the fur traders were then striving to draw the Indians therefrom to the westward where the beaver was to be found in plenty<sup>1</sup>.

### The Intermediate Dénés.

The next group in our list is that of the Intermediate Dénés. The southern tribes belonging thereto, as well as the Western Dénés, are personally known to the present writer. Their ethnographical standing can therefore be stated without difficulty. This cannot be said of the more northern — and generally less important — bands, in connection wherewith not a little confusion exists in the writings of even the best ethnologists. After a careful survey of the literature bearing on the subject, as well as from personal knowledge obtained through Nahanaïs and Sékanais informants, I think I can safely present the following as the most reliable nomenclature.

22nd. The most northerly of the Intermediate Dénés on the Hudson's Bay Company's map are denominated thereon "Mountain Indians". But north of them is another tribe called by Richardson "Sheep People" and by Franklin *Ambawtaw-hoot-dinneh*, or Sheep Indians<sup>2</sup>, because of the *ovis montana* which its members hunt on the summits of the Rocky Mountains, whence they regularly descend to Fort Good Hope (about 66° 25') to trade their pelts. They are the *Esba-tha-o'tinne* of Petitot, who inadvertently shifts their habitat as far south as Fort Liard<sup>3</sup>. *Quandoque bonus dormitat Homerus*. Their numbers are not given, but it is understood that the tribe is not populous.

23rd. Due south of these, and always within the gorges or on the slopes of the Rockies, is, by about 65° N. lat., another band whose trading rendezvous is Fort Norman on the Mackenzie. These are the real Mountain Indians of the l. c. maps, of Franklin<sup>4</sup>, and of Richardson himself<sup>5</sup>, though he would fain let us confound them with another tribe still farther south. That author dubs them *Dahā'-dtinnē*, though he remarks<sup>6</sup> that they assume themselves the tribal appellation *Cheta-ut-dtinnē*, meaning evidently *Tsé-tha-o'tinne*, or people among the rocks<sup>7</sup>. They are identical with the *Mauvais Monde* or *Et'qa-o'tinné*<sup>8</sup> of Petitot, who he says are very little known. So little known, in-

<sup>1</sup> "Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea", vol. II, p. 50. This is fully confirmed by the circumstance that S. Hearne wrote sixty years before: "Our Northern Indians who trade at the Factory, as well as all the Copper tribe, pass their whole summer on the barren ground, where they generally find plenty of deer" ("A Journey to the Northern Ocean", p. 230).

<sup>2</sup> "Arctic S. Exped.", vol. II, p. 7; "Journey to the Shores", v. III, p. 54.

<sup>3</sup> *Mémoire abrégé*, p. 246.

<sup>4</sup> Vol. III, p. 54.

<sup>5</sup> Vol. II, p. 6.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>7</sup> "Rocks" is the usual name of the Rocky Mountains in the formation of tribal names. Dall erroneously makes two tribes of that single division, which he locates on the Liard River and calls respectively *Dāho'-tenā'* and *Achē-to-tin'neh* (*Contributions to N. Am. Ethnology*, vol. I, p. 33).

<sup>8</sup> The exact equivalent of the word *Kut'qa-kut'qin*.

deed, that he goes to the length of writing that they "probably belong to the Carrier tribe of the west"<sup>1</sup>!

In a different work he states that they "frequent the range of the Peaks"<sup>2</sup>, thereby referring undoubtedly to the "Peak Mountains" of the H. B. Co. map. That range, as represented on the old document, has no existence. The country west of the Rockies where it should be found I have myself explored. It is occupied by various detached mountains or short ranges of secondary importance running in an opposite direction to that of the so-called Peak Mountains, and the entire region belongs to the Sékanais.

Richardson states that those Indians "are ill understood by the Dog-rib interpreters" at Fort Norman<sup>3</sup>. This remark, taken side by side with the statement by Thomas Simpson to the effect that his party caused a panic among the Dog-Ribs he met, because the latter took them for "Mountain Indians", makes it doubly certain that we are not mistaken in our identification, inasmuch as, when he encountered the Dog-Ribs, the explorer was nearing the valley of the "Mountaineers", quite close to Fort Norman<sup>4</sup>.

According to Petitot that tribe does not contain more than 300 or 400 souls. Franklin, who almost invariably underrates the native population, estimates them at 40 hunters<sup>5</sup>.

24th. In spite of Richardson's reiterated insinuation that the "Mountain Indians" and the "Strong Bows" of the maps are one and the same tribe, we have now, always on the same range of mountains, a large band of Dénés who must be identified as the "Strong Bows" or "Thick-wood Indians" of the early explorers. They are the natives whom Richardson calls *Tsilla-ta-ut'-tinnè*, "or Brushwood People"<sup>6</sup>, and none other than Petitot's *Etchare-ottine*, "people against (a shelter)", probably so called because their main seat is close to the stump or abrupt end of the Rocky Mountains' main trunk. To the western Dénés they are *Tsé-loh-ne*, people at the end of the rocks, because, being slightly to the east of that range and beyond a great gap in the same, they appear to my Carriers to dwell in a vast plain which is the termination of all mountains<sup>7</sup>. That region is drained by the Liard after it has forced its way through the Rockies.

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoire*, p. 246.

<sup>2</sup> *Monographie*, p. XX.

<sup>3</sup> "Arct. S. Expedition", vol. II, p. 7.

<sup>4</sup> "Narrative of the Discoveries on the North Coast of America", p. 95.

<sup>5</sup> *Op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 54.

<sup>6</sup> "Arctic S. Expedition", v. II, p. 6. Franklin, who calls them *Tsillaw-daw-hoot-dinneh*, wrongly makes them a distinct tribe, though he admits that "they are but little known" (*Op. cit.*, III, p. 57).

<sup>7</sup> This they claim is the general rendez-vous of the feathered and large venison game, a statement which tallies remarkably well with Dawson's report on the upper Liard River, where he found "the moose particularly plentiful" (Report on an Exploration made in 1887 in the Yukon District", p. 25 B).

According to Franklin<sup>1</sup>, the number of their hunters may amount to 70, a figure which supposes a population of at least 350. Though they generally assume a certain degree of superiority over their congeners of the northeast, they were always considered quiet Indians and rather friendly to the whites until 1813, when, acting under provocation, a small party of them destroyed Fort Nelson, on the Liard, and murdered its inmates.

25th. The field of our researches is now devoid of difficulties. We slightly retrace our steps towards the north, and find the Nahanaïs<sup>2</sup>, *tén'e*, whose habitat lies to the northwest and the northeast of that of the *Tsélohné*, but which the exigencies of clearness and the topographical analogies between the areas occupied by the three preceding tribes have forced us to pass by. The Nahanaïs are not, like the former, a mountain tribe, but their territory extends east and west of the Rocky Mountains to considerable distances. In the west, their main seat is Thalthan, a fishing village on the Stickine River, by  $58^{\circ} 2$  N. latitude, wherefrom native hunters radiate as far south as the sources of the Nass, and in the north as far as Teslin Lake and the whole drainage of the Taku River, as well as the upper portions of the streams which flow northward to the Lewes, where they confine to the southern Loucheux.

On the east side of the Rockies, their habitat, if faithfully described by the early explorers, has shifted from north to south within a relatively short space of time. Thus Mackenzie's full map of British North America locates them, by the end of the eighteenth century, on Great Bear River by  $65^{\circ}$  N. lat. The area now frequented by them is more than three degrees further south, consisting mainly of the angle between the Liard and the Mackenzie.

Petitot estimates at 300 the population of that band of Nahanaïs, and their co-tribesmen nearer the Pacific were but recently 700 or more, among whom the passage of gold miners has been the reverse of beneficial.

The western Nahanaïs are divided into three bands with distinct linguistic features: those of the Stickine River, or Thalthan Nahanaïs; the Taku sub-tribe, along the river of the same name and some distance to the north of its basin, and the so-called Kaska (*Kas-ha*), in the vicinity of Dease Lake and McDame Creek, near the Rocky Mountains. The name of the auriferous district commonly called Cassiar is merely a corruption of *Kas-ha*, and the subtribe

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, v. III, p. 56.

<sup>2</sup> "People of the Setting Sun". Properly *Nah-ané*; they call themselves *Tén'e*. Synonymy for the tribal name: Nathana (Mackenzie), Nohhanies (Franklin), Nòhhanè (Richardson), Nehanni (Latham), Nahany (Simpson and map), Nahawney (Kenticott), Niharnies (Geo. Simpson), Nehaunees (Dall), Nehawni (Pilling), Nahanie Nahaunie (Campbell and Dawson). J. W. Mackay calls them Ku-na-na (Tenth Rep. B. A. A. S., pp. 38—39), which is the name given them by the Tlinget of the Pacific Coast.

so denominated has erroneously been declared "quite a different race from the Nahanies of the Stickeen"<sup>1</sup>.

26th. South of the eastern Nahanais are the Beavers (*Dané* to themselves, *Tsa'-tenne*, etc. to others). Their present habitat is the immense plains drained by the Peace River, between Fort Dunvegan and a point some distance from Lake Athabaska. The H. B. Co. map of 1857 places their lands at least two degrees further south, namely on Athabaska and Beaver Rivers, while Mackenzie's pushes it no less than ten degrees north thereof, or eight from the area now occupied by the tribe. Its population is at present some 700 individuals, whose ancestors originally formed but one tribe with the Sékanais. The breach between them and the latter was further widened when, about 1780, their contact with the first fur-traders from eastern Canada put them in possession of fire-arms, which they used with such a lack of discrimination or humanity against their less favoured congeners nearer the Rockies that they practically drove them to the west thereof, and acquired for themselves a reputation for wanton cruelty the echo of which is still living to this day, even among the far away Carriers<sup>2</sup>.

27th. A further scission in the Sékanais ranks, caused by an insignificant incident<sup>3</sup>, brought into existence still another tribe, whose members wended their way to the south, and, unable to stand their ground against the Beavers, the Crees, or the Blackfeet, sought admission into the confederacy of the last named Indians, a powerful nation, of which they have since formed a part, while keeping their own language. These are the Sarcees or Sarcis, the Surcees of Harmon, the Susi of Latham, the Circus of Richardson. Their present population is only 190, and they are located on a Government reserve about five miles southwest of Calgary, Alberta. The land allotted them comprises three townships six miles by eighteen, and they are the only ones of all the Canadian Dénés penned up between so sharply defined boundaries.

28th. Our last tribe of Intermediate Dénés is the Sékanais (*Téné*), or more properly *Tsé'-kéh-ne*, people on the rocks<sup>4</sup>. Undoubtedly a mountain race, their original home was on the eastern slopes of the Rockies<sup>5</sup>, whence they had to migrate west as already related. A few of them have returned to their priscan fastnesses, but the bulk of the tribe, whose numbers have

<sup>1</sup> "Notes on the northern portion of B. C.", by G. M. Dawson, p. 10. For more detailed information on the Nahanais, see my paper. "The Nahane and their Language", Trans. Can. Inst., vol. VII.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. "History of the Northern Interior of British Columbia", p. 31.

<sup>3</sup> "Notes on the Western Dénés", p. 12.

<sup>4</sup> Tribal Synonymy: Sicanies (Harmon), Sikani (Hale), Tsitka-ni (Richardson), Tsikani (Latham), Toekanies (T. Simpson), Sicaunie (Powell), Thekenneh (Kennicott), Sekanies (Brinton), Thè-kkanè (Petitot), Tekenè (Taché, whose printer perhaps inadvertently omitted the *s* after the *t*); Siccany of several English writers.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Harmon's Journal, p. 265 (N. Y. reprint).

dwindled to perhaps 450 souls, now roams along the Finlay, or upper Peace, and the Parsnip Rivers. They also hunt through the region around McLeod's Lake as far west as Carp Lake inclusive, where they meet the Carriers, and from the Rocky Mountains to the forks of Tatla Lake in the southwest; thence north to Bear Lake and about  $57^{\circ} 30'$ , taking in all the mountainous territory intervening between that sheet of water and the Finlay.

Forts Grahame, on the latter, and McLeod, on the lake of the same name, are their chief trading resorts, since Fort Connolly, on Bear Lake, has been abandoned. They are by necessity as much as by natural instinct inveterate nomads, and I know of no people so unsophisticated or more honest among the various races of American aborigines I have ever met.

### The Western Dénés.

The last group of northern or Canadian Dénés is composed of the Babines, the Carriers and the Chilcotins. All of them are remarkable for their non-Déné social organization and their semi-sedentary habits — and in this respect the western Nahanaïs should also be included in this branch of the family. Their dialects are also considerably richer than those of their eastern congeners<sup>1</sup>.

29th. The Babines (*Tæni*), more generally known to the aborigines by their tribal name *Nato'-tinne*<sup>2</sup>, are divided into lake Babines and river Babines or *Akwilgét*<sup>3</sup>. The former dwell on the long sheet of water named after them, and north thereof, until they meet the Sékanais in the northeast and the Kitkson — a Tsimsian tribe — in the north. The river Babines claim the whole basin of the Bulkley to its sources, and the western halves of Lakes French, Cambie and Dawson, in the south. They now muster only 530 souls; but as late as 1812 the lake Babines alone boasted a population of no less than 2,000<sup>4</sup>.

30th. The Carriers (*Tæne*), whose meaningless cognomen *Takhet* has served as a theme for the display of the phonetic and graphic abilities of ethnographers and others<sup>5</sup>, consider themselves an aggregate of seven subdivisions, namely: the *Tłaz'-tenne*, Lake Tremblay and upper end of L. Stuart; *Na'kratzli'-tenne*, lower half of the same body of water; *Natlo'-tenne*, Fraser

<sup>1</sup> This remark does not apply to the dialect of the Nahanaïs, even of Thalthan, which is essentially an eastern idiom.

<sup>2</sup> Which however, applies only to the lake Babines.

<sup>3</sup> A Tsimsian name meaning "well-dressed".

<sup>4</sup> "History of the N. I. of B. C.", p. 92 (third edition).

<sup>5</sup> The H. B. Co. map calls Takall the aborigines occupying the lake region of British Columbia, and quite curiously shifts the Carriers to the littoral opposite Vancouver Island! These Indians are Tâ-cullies to Harmon, Takuli to Richardson, Tahkali and Tahcully to Anderson, Takellies to Hazlitt, Takulli to Dall, Teheili to Dawson, Talkcolis to Petitot, and Takully or Tacully to others. They are the *Porteurs* of the French Canadians.

Lake; *Tano'-tenne*, Fort George<sup>1</sup>; *Nutša'-tenne*, basin of the Blackwater; *Nazkhu'-tenne*, Quesnel and mouth of Blackwater River, and *Lthau'-tenne*, Fort Alexandria. Instead of these, R. Cox gives us<sup>2</sup> the so-called Slowercuss, Dinais, Dinnee, and Talkotin — as fanciful a nomenclature as ever existed, even in the works of non-professional English-speaking writers.

From a broader linguistic standpoint, the Carriers may be properly classed as Upper and Lower Carriers. The area covered by the former is from the forks of Lake Tatla in the north down to a line running midway between Fraser and Stuart Lakes and some distance above the mouth of the Stuart River. All the remaining forests in the south belong to the latter. The entire tribe is denominated *Arelne*, "Carriers", by the Sékanais, while the northern portion thereof is known to the Babines as *'Kutæne*, a word which seems to-day meaningless.

The total Carrier population is now 970. The reason of its name, and its interesting social organization and customs will later on claim our undivided attention. Meanwhile, it is consoling to remark that, thanks to the influence of the missionaries stationed among them, that tribe has, during the last thirty years, constantly been on the increase, its ranks now rallying from the rude shock experienced by the establishment of the first trading posts in the far west. Unfortunately, more than half of the southern Carriers had been carried off by disease, epidemics and loose morals before the action of the priest could be made to tell on their daily lives.

Of all the Déné tribes in the north or the south, the Carriers form the only one which can boast a continuous history, running from 1660 down to our own times<sup>3</sup>, whereby the workings of the native mind, as exemplified by their deeds, are betrayed in a more authentic manner than could be presented in the most learned treatise.

31st. This honour is, however, shared to a certain extent, by the Chilcotins (*Tæni*, or more usually *nænkhai-tæni*), a tribe whose real distinctive name is *Tsitkohh'-tin*<sup>4</sup>. They occupy the valley of the river called after them, and the bunch-grass covered table-lands bordering on the same, as far south as the Lillooet Mountains (51° 30' N. lat.). In the east their territory is bounded by the Fraser<sup>5</sup>, in the north by that of the Carriers, while in the west nature has opposed the Cascade range of mountains as a barrier against

<sup>1</sup> Where quite a few Sékanais are now settled. *Tano'-tenne* is the name given them by the people of Stuart Lake.

<sup>2</sup> "Adventures on the Columbia", p. 323. New-York, 1832.

<sup>3</sup> "History of the Northern Interior of British Columbia", by the present writer. Toronto, W. Briggs, 1904 (third ed. in 1905).

<sup>4</sup> W. H. Dall is more accurate than usual when he calls them Tsilkotinneh.

<sup>5</sup> But it is only in recent times that they have reached its banks. Their main seat was, before the advent of the whites, at Nakunt'lun Lake, in the northwest corner of their present habitat, where a very few of them still remain, or remained till a late date.

intercourse with the coast tribes, a barrier which could not always protect the latter against the inroads of their dreaded enemies.

Their numbers cannot to-day be more than 450; but shortly before 1864, they were still fully 1500. Small-pox, introduced from the sea-coast in that very year, reduced their ranks by about one-third. A second third of the tribe was soon after carried off as a result of an infamous transaction, whereby two white men sold out to them blankets which they knew to be impregnated with the germs of the same disease<sup>1</sup>.

This enumeration of the Northern Dénés would not be complete without at least a mention of the remnants of a tribe of Déné origin, which Dr. F. Boas discovered some years ago on the shores of Portland Inlet, by about 55° N. lat. If we are to believe the late J. W. Mackay, these would simply be the descendants of three or four families hailing from Thalthan who, not much more than fifty years ago, got lost in the woods while attempting to reach Chunah, on the sea coast. Having struck the west shore of Portland Inlet, they unwittingly tumbled into the arms of their foes, among whom they had to remain in a dependent condition. But, according to Dr. Boas<sup>2</sup>, some seventy years ago, that band numbered already about 500 souls, most of whom "were exterminated by continual attacks of the Sa'nak'oan, the Tlingit tribe of Boca de Quadra and of the Laquiyip".

When that author met their present survivors, they were not more than a dozen individuals, of whom only two could speak their language correctly.

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<sup>1</sup> "History of the N. I. of B. C.", p. 317. In common with the Hudson's Bay Company officers of his time, Latham erroneously imagines that the Chilcotins are but one of several subdivisions of the Carrier tribe.

<sup>2</sup> Tenth Report on the North-Western Tribes of Canada, pp. 34—35.

## CHAPTER III.

**The southern Dénés.****The Great Scission in the Déné Family.**

Although a few of their tribes eventually adopted a semi-sedentary mode of life, the Dénés form an essentially nomadic race. Not only do they now delight in roaming over the boundless wastes and through the unending forests of the north, and enjoy the sensation of being lords of all they survey, but it did actually come to pass that areas which, desolate as they are, should have possessed a much larger population finally proved too small for their restless spirit and insatiable ambition. Their roving propensities did not allow them to stay long in their northern domains. Or indeed it may be that the very barrenness of their original home in America, or rather the inclemency of its climate, prompted them to seek more pleasant hunting grounds.

This is a very interesting ethnological problem, and, as I have elsewhere written<sup>1</sup>, it is likely that the man is still unborn who will satisfactorily solve it. How is it that a large portion of the Déné race detached itself from the parent stock and migrated south? When did this exodus occur? What was the route followed by the adventurous bands? We can only answer by a series of hypotheses, more or less plausible as they are based on more or less significant facts.

Though we must leave untouched for the present the question of the origin of the Dénés taken as a whole, it will not be against the general plan of this work to state briefly that there can hardly be any doubt as to the tribes now stationed within the United States having emigrated from the north of the continent. The general tendencies of the nation have always been southward, even with that portion of it left in what is now British territory, which has long been noted for its quietness and natural cowardice. A tradition is still current among the old Carriers that "days were formerly exceedingly short; so short indeed that sewing the edge of a muskrat skin was all a woman could do between sunrise and sunset". Though my informant did not realise it, this unmistakably points to the arctic regions as places of

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<sup>1</sup> "Notes on the Western Dénés". Trans. Can. Inst., vol. IV, p. 12.

previous residence or passage of tribes now established considerably to the south thereof. But of this more shall be said when we come to the question of the nation's origin.

Any intelligent observer who studies the sketch map annexed to this chapter, especially if aware of the special characteristic, boldness, of the most southern tribes in the two main groups of the entire race, will, it seems to me, readily enough concur in the following surmise.

In times past, for reasons that shall probably never be ascertained, an important part of the nation, led by the restless and aggressive Apaches acting as scouts or vanguard to the bulk of the moving army now called Navahoes, fought its way to the banks of the San Juan River<sup>1</sup> and ultimately of the Rio Grande, from Utah to Arizona, New Mexico and Texas, some of the former tribe even crossing into old Mexico. "United we stand" seems to have been the motto of the moving mass of humanity, and they did stand against many odds, finally securing a strong hold on the country south of the San Juan mountains. Their progress was only arrested by encountering the sedentary Pueblos<sup>2</sup> and the superior Sonoran tribes, some of which, as the Tepehuanas of northern Mexico, are said by the old chroniclers to have been the most valiant of all the aborigines of New Spain, though laborious and devoted to their fields<sup>3</sup>.

But insignificant bands of stragglers, who, either allured by the natural advantages of the spots in which the migrating body may have temporarily stayed in its march southward, unwilling or unable to go further, were eventually hemmed in by hostile tribes and gradually driven to the sea coast, where they had to remain in a more or less subordinate condition, in the limited areas where the whites found them in the course of the last century.

Considering the direction of the Japanese sea current, which sweeps all along the Pacific coast, and the many well authenticated cases of junks hailing from remote Asia which, at comparatively recent dates, were stranded on the shores of the Pacific States, the hypothesis of a general emigration by water is also admissible. In that case, the Déné tribes found along that coast would simply be the descendants of parties who chose to stay where they had temporarily landed. But when we bear in mind that the Dénés are eminently a race of hunters and nomads, and that there is no reason for supposing that they ever permanently occupied the shores of the northern Pacific, which, on the contrary, seems to have been from time immemorial in the possession of powerful allophylian peoples, this last supposition will not appear very probable.

<sup>1</sup> An affluent of the Colorado River.

<sup>2</sup> Who, however, could not always hold their own against the fury of the invaders, since, according to Capt. J. G. Bourke in the "Journal of American Folklore" (1890, p. 114), the Apaches still remember driving from their homes the cliff-dwellers established west of Santa Fe.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. "The American Race", by D. G. Brinton, p. 126.

Moreover, if those bands remained willingly in their new homes, their very weakness must evidently have made them the butt for relentless oppression at the hands of the previous occupants of the soil among whom, as with all primitive races, might is right. Now it is inconceivable that such natural rovers as the new recruits were should have consented to live practically in a state of vassalage and confined within such narrow limits, if they had already the experience of a long sea voyage to point out to them an easy way of escape.

### Effects of the Exodus.

As a matter of fact, these small communities soon degenerated, losing many of their family traits, and even, owing to their helplessness, allowing their language to undergo very material alterations. As could well be expected, though the bulk of the emigrants owe to-day many of their customs and most of their mythology to the foreign tribes with which they have so long been in contact, they have remained remarkably Déné in their chief physiological features, and, when the transmutability of some consonants is borne in mind, their language has retained a wonderful purity, considering the usual influence of environment and the natural growth of tongues, which invariably follows different lines according to the different geographical and economic status of the separated ethnic elements.

This statement, however, should not be construed as claiming for the Navaho stock an absolute freedom from admixture of blood with heterogeneous races, as it is well known that Utes and representatives of less prominent tribes have occasionally intermarried with them. Nay, they even claim that the members of one of their clans are descended from a Spanish woman, who was taken prisoner in one of their marauding expeditions<sup>1</sup>. But on the whole they still exhibit the Déné physique and some of the traits of the Déné moral characteristics with a surprising fidelity.

On the other hand, the fragments of tribes on the Pacific, though much nearer to the parent tree in the north, are immeasurably less Déné in language or bodily features than the Navahoes.

As if to confirm this theory of the general march of the migratory bodies, we will see further on that, at a comparatively late date, a portion of the Chilcotins, who are in the north what the Apaches are in the south — restless and ever ready to invade a neighbour's country — did actually move south, as their congeners had done in prehistoric times; but, being too few and unable to stand their ground against vastly superior forces, their progress was checked, and they were gradually absorbed by the Salish race among which they had ventured.

The case of the Sarkees, recorded in the preceding chapter, is another instance of this tendency to make for the south. Nay, the very Apaches, who

<sup>1</sup> "Navaho Legends", by W. Matthews, p. 146.

seen to have started the original movement, are to-day another proof of this. Led by their innate roving proclivities, some of them went so far as to cross into Mexico; but, finding no followers, they ultimately retraced their steps, as we shall see presently.

### The Northern Dénés remembered by their Southern Kinsmen.

The northern Dénés have absolutely no knowledge of any people of their blood living hundreds, nay thousands, of miles away from them, in countries where frost and snow storms are replaced by sunshine and sand blizzards. This is but natural, as they had no hand in the fateful movement which was to change the ethnographical map of the continent. However, this very ignorance might perhaps be construed as pointing to a peaceful division of the race, when an important portion of it departed without even attracting the attention of the other. A separation caused by bloodshed and violence would probably have left in the minds of both parties some trace of the difficulties which led thereto.

But a converse reasoning is hardly satisfactory. If the entire race originally formed a compact whole, the descendants of those who moved off should know more or less of the kindred their forefathers had left, and whose former peregrinations to the American continent they had probably shared. I was therefore somewhat surprised at first when told by the late Dr. D. G. Brinton that "the Navajos . . . have no reminiscence of their ancestral home in the north"<sup>1</sup>. But, on second thought, it may easily be seen that, even though this statement should be correct, it can hardly be taken as meaning that they have altogether forgotten their northern kinsmen. It is a well known practice of the native mind to transfer to places within one's actual knowledge and vicinity the scenes of the happenings handed down by their ancestors<sup>2</sup>.

Now, Father Leopold Ostermann, O. F. M., the latest investigator in the Navaho field, whose pen has already yielded valuable information on that tribe, spontaneously wrote but a year ago: "The Navajos have a faint tradi-

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<sup>1</sup> "The American Race", p. 72.

<sup>2</sup> Another motive, which sometimes actuates the displacement of events in the traditions of Indian tribes, is selfishness or personal interest. According to the Navaho mythology, that nation emerged from an under-world through an island in a small lake within the San Juan mountains, that is, the heart, as it were, of the country they have long claimed as theirs. Such a pretension, in the face of aborigines (the Utes) who had an anterior right to that land, is easy to understand. About 1820, an accident happened whereby the entire portion of the Babine tribe living along the Bulkley was deprived of its fishing grounds (See my "History of the Northern Interior of British Columbia", p. 8). Those Indians then took forcible possession of the fishery near the mouth of the river, which had previously belonged to a Tsimsian tribe, and have kept it ever since. Some difficulty having lately arisen between the two races, the question of the right to the fishery was brought to the attention of the Agent, when the Babines unblushingly and very loudly protested that the disputed grounds had always been theirs. In the course of a generation or two, what is now known to be false will probably be honestly regarded as the merest expression of truth.

tion of other Navajos, or Diné, away to the north, whom they call 'Déné nahodloni', i. e. 'they who are also Navajos' . . . They even tell of a party of Navajos who once set out to look up the Déné Nahodloni, and say that their hunters found their fellow-tribesmen, stayed with them a short time, and then returned to their homes in the south, after their northern kin had refused to go with them"<sup>1</sup>.

In a private letter to the present writer, he confirms his printed statement by adding: "Most of the old Navajos, at least all the old-timers whom I have asked, know something about the Déné Nahodloni . . . They know that somewhere, at a great distance, there are 'people who are also Déné', who speak their language, and who at one time were one people with themselves. They do not mean the Apaches, for the Apaches have time and again made themselves very clearly and distinctly known to the Navajos. The home of the Déné Nahodloni is said by some to be in the north, by others in the northwest; most of them do not know in which direction to place it"<sup>2</sup>. These declarations, coming from a missionary who, for several years, has been stationed among the Indians of whom he writes, are important to the ethnologist, and well worth to be put on record for the benefit of future students of the American aboriginal races.

When did that fateful split occur in the Déné family? The fact that it must have taken place at a comparatively early period is made evident by this passage from A. F. Bandelier's "Indians of the Southwestern United States": "When the Spaniards first met them [the Navahoes] in 1541, they were tillers of the soil, erected large granaries for their crops, irrigated their fields by artificial water-courses or *acequias*, and lived in substantial dwellings, partly underground"<sup>3</sup>. According to Brinton, the Navahoes place the date of their exodus — or rather of the beginning of their separate national existence — about seven centuries ago. Father Leopold is inclined to think that computation excessive, and suggests from 500 to 600 years as being a more probable lapse of time. On the other hand, judging from the morphology of the Navaho dialect, one would feel warranted in inferring that the scission in the stock affected especially tribes which had more in common with the northwestern than the northeastern Dénés, and that it happened before time and commerce with aliens had resulted in the peculiar social organization among the former which is avowedly of a comparatively late date, and caused those complicated conjugations now proper to the Carrier and Babine dialects. Our reason for this deduction is that "the Navahoes have more similarity with the Sékanais sociologically than with any other of the northern Déné tribes, while the root words of their language approach very closely to those

<sup>1</sup> "The Catholic Pioneer", Oct., 1905.

<sup>2</sup> Dec., 27, 1905.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in Brinton's "American Race", p. 72.

of the Carriers, and the conjugation of their verbs to that of the Montagnais"<sup>1</sup>.

### The Names of the Southern Dénés.

Neither Apache nor Navaho is a Déné term. As the tribes they represent constitute the most populous and most widely known of all the Déné branches, a few words on the probable origin and meaning of their names may not be out of place.

Navaho was originally written Navajo<sup>2</sup>, and it may be seen at a glance that it is a word of Spanish origin. According to the late Dr. W. Matthews, that name is generally supposed to mean "clasping-knife or razor", and to have been given by the Spaniards because the Navaho warriors carried great stone knives about their persons. It has also been suggested that the name may come from an homonymous word meaning pool or small lake. Finally Horatio Hale, a prominent American ethnologist, recorded the fact that some take it to signify Cornfield People<sup>3</sup>. In the light of the latest researches, this interpretation does not seem devoid of appropriateness.

Father Leopold's own explanation, however, is still more plausible. As the name is evidently Spanish, the records of the old Spanish missionaries and explorers must naturally contain the key to its meaning. Now, in a memorial to the king of Spain written in 1630 by Fra Alonzo de Benavides, O. F. M. the writer, after describing the Gila-Apaches, says that more than fifty leagues north of them "one encounters the Province of the Apaches of Navajo. Although they are the same Apache nation as the foregoing, they are subject and subordinate to another Chief Captain, and have a distinct mode of living. For those of back yonder did not use to plant, but sustained themselves by the chase; and to-day we have broken land for them and taught them to plant. But these of Navajo are very great farmers, for that is what Navajo signifies — great planted fields"<sup>4</sup>.

From the expression "the Apaches of Navajo" it is evident that the last word did at first represent, not the natives now called by it, but the country they inhabited. The southern Dénés were to the Spaniards simply Apaches who, for the sake of convenience, were at first qualified by their particular habitats, until frequent repetition and love of conciseness caused the names of the Indians to be discarded in favour of that of their land, as it often happens even in our days.

As to the word Apache itself, the same missionary proposes as a possible etymology the Spanish verb *apacentar*, to drive herds to pasture, and his supposition derives colour from the fact that A. F. Bandelier, speaking of the

<sup>1</sup> Letter from Fr. Leopold, Dec., 27, 1905.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Matthews is the party responsible for the change in the spelling of the word.

<sup>3</sup> "Language as a Test of Mental Capacity". Trans. Roy. Soc. Canada, vol. IX, p. 86.

<sup>4</sup> "Land of the Sunshine", vol. XIII, No. 6.

Apaches in general, calls them occasionally "the Apaches-Vacqueros, or cowherds"<sup>1</sup>. But, personally, I would feel more inclined to accept Dr. Ales Hrdlicka's suggestion that that term is probably a corruption of *Opaka*, which, in the dialect of the Pimas, the southern Dénés' neighbours, means enemies, or aliens, as the Navajos' *Ana'e* and the northern Dénés, *Atna*<sup>2</sup>.

Great-planted-fields was therefore originally meant by Navaho, and this interpretation is further explained by the fact that, when first encountered by the Spaniards, the Navahoes were in possession of an immense territory, some of which — possibly that part of it which was first seen by the white intruders — was planted with corn. *Nava* means in Spanish a flat, even piece of land, a plain or a field, and the suffix *-ajo*, the equivalent of the modern *ado*, is not only an augmentative, but also a depreciative desinence, much, I should think, as the French ending *-aille* in *ferraille*, *mangeaille*, which signify respectively iron and food of little account. Therefore, by writing "the Apaches of Navajo" Benavides must have meant "the Indians who live on the large, more or less worthless fields". Those who are familiar with the character of their lands will not gainsay the appropriateness of the appellation.

### The Navaho Country.

This is a more or less arid region, made up of high plateaus traversed from north to south by the Tumicha mountains, a lofty range covered with magnificent pine forests, and watered by the Rio de Chelly and other tributaries of the San Juan River. The territory is cut up in numberless valleys, gulches or stupendous cañons, which the waters of a primeval epoch have formed by the usual process of erosion. In a word, the Navaho country is a part of America's wonderland. Father Leopold grows enthusiastic in his praises of its beauties, such as they are.

"It is", he writes, "a land of sandy deserts and wastes, where for miles and miles no tree can be seen — nothing but sand and sagebrush — and the eye tires of the surrounding monotony; where the sweeping breeze picks up clouds of sand, whirls it about in wild fury, carries it along for miles, and dashes its tiny grainlets with stinging force against the face of the traveller, who can see hardly ten yards before him for sand and dust. Again it is a land of woods and forests, where the spreading piñon, with its tasteful nuts, grows besides the graceful spruce and fir, the fragrant cedar and juniper, the noble pine and the white-gleaming cottonwood, the quaking asp and the aromatic sumach, the mountain mahogany and the box elder, clusters of

<sup>1</sup> "Final Report on Investigation in the Southwest", p. 38.

<sup>2</sup> After a private letter to the writer, dated Jan., 20, 1906. In a valuable article on the Apaches, advance proof-sheets of which have just been sent me through the kindness of the Director Bureau of Ethnology, Washington, Mr. Hodge says that the name is probably derived from the Zuñi *Apachu*, which has exactly the same signification. The Texan tribes called them *Kantsi*, i. e. deceivers, or traitors.

willows and patches of scrubby mountain oak; a land of meadows, covered with bright grass; a land of flowers, where not only the forest but also the hilltops and slopes are starred and studded from spring till fall with wild flowers of every kind, color and description; a land of fields, where yellow dwarfish cornstalks bow their tasseled ears, and wave their plumed tips in the breeze.

"Now it is a land of heat, where the atmosphere frequently trembles and quivers in excessive heat, 25 and 30 feet above the soil; where the vault of heaven sometimes seems to be an immense dome of heated steel, and the sun a disk of polished brass in white heat, and the breeze a breath from some fiery furnace, yet where the shaded places are always comfortable, and where sunstrokes are unknown; then a land of cold, where snow blizzards and hail storms rage; where the hoary frost casts his silvery net over the landscape, covered with the 'beautiful white'; where the icy breath of Boreas pierces even into the marrow, and the mercury hovers about below zero . . .

"It is a land of 'magnificent distances', where the clear, light pure air acts like the lenses of a telescope, bringing distant objects seemingly almost within reach; where one can ride or drive towards a near-by peak or grove for hours until the intervening distance is perceptibly lessened; where twenty-five or thirty miles is deemed close neighborhood"<sup>1</sup>.

But we must with regret descend from the heights of admiration to the more prosaic task of detailing the native population of that wonderful land.

Here, however, we may be allowed a pause simply to record the fact that neither the Apaches, nor the Navahoes are the primordial inhabitants of the countries in which circumstances have finally forced them to settle. The accompanying illustration will tell of a race which is now buried in the depths of oblivion<sup>2</sup> and preceded the roving Déné bands in the occupation of the soil, where cliff-dwellings, ruins of walls and prehistoric pottery are by themselves sufficient to attest their complete ethnic diversity from its present occupants.

### The Apache Tribes.

The most southerly of all the Déné tribes was but lately the band of Lipans (*Ipa-nde*). In the eighteenth century those warlike people were to be found on the lower Rio Grande, while some of them even penetrated as far south as the coast of Texas<sup>3</sup>. When Jose Cortez wrote, in 1799, the Lipans occupied part of Texas, from the Comanche country to the Rio Grande.

<sup>1</sup> "The Catholic Pioneer", July, 1905.

<sup>2</sup> Though some claim, not without a show of reason, that it was identical with that of the present Pueblos.

<sup>3</sup> Cortez in Pac. R. R. Report, 1856. Vol. III, pp. 118—19. At the last moment, I am in receipt of the new edition of Powell's linguistic map to which such extended references have been made in the course of our first chapter. As far as the habitat of the Dénés is concerned, it is a great improvement on the first edition. All the points of contact between that race and



of Fort Stanton and other military posts, whose main duty seems to be to keep them from the war-path. A band of 37 individuals — including the above mentioned Lipans — who, for over twenty-five years, had roamed over the plains and mountains of Mexico, were in June, 1904, united to their kinsmen in this reserve. All are now known as Mescalero Apaches.

2nd. Four degrees of longitude west of the Mescalero Agency and exactly by the same latitude, is a much larger area similarly set apart for other bands of Apaches under the name of White Mountain Reservation. This is for official purposes divided into two Agencies, that of San Carlos, in the south, and that of Fort Apache, in the north. The former comprises 2866 square miles, being bounded in the north by Salt and Black Rivers, which separate it from the Fort Apache reservation. The last official figures for the Déné inhabitants<sup>1</sup> of the San Carlos Agency are:

Tonto Apaches . . . . .	667
Coyotero Apaches . . . . .	489
San Carlos Apaches . . . . .	1066
Total . . . . .	2222

Dr. Ales Hrdlicka divides them into 13 bands, called after their location or the name of their chief, as the above divisions are not recognised by the natives themselves. Their principal settlements are in the valley of the Gila, from the old Fort Thomas to a few miles beyond San Carlos Agency, and in the valley of San Carlos River<sup>2</sup>. According to the above mentioned authority, fifty years ago many of them lived on the upper Salt River, and "one of the men said he heard from the elders that they formerly lived in what is now the vicinity of Flagstaff, at the base of the San Francisco mountains<sup>3</sup>", just to the west of the Navahoes' territory. This statement further confirms my own contention that the Déné migrations have always been southward.

To the above population must be added 38 individuals who have established themselves at Angora, Arizona, and a few families which are stationed at Camp Verde.

3rd. All we have to record here of the Fort Apache Agency is that it contains a Déné population of 2058, living on 2628 square miles of land. The White Mountain Reservation, with the two above mentioned Agencies, lies within the Territory of Arizona.

4th. To the northeast of this, in New Mexico, is the reserve of the Jicarilla Apaches, who in 1904 were reported as numbering 782<sup>4</sup>. Private

<sup>1</sup> And minus 53 so-called Mohave Apaches, who are not Déné.

<sup>2</sup> "Notes on the San Carlos Apache", in "American Anthropologist", vol. VII, p. 480.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 481.

<sup>4</sup> "Annual Reports", etc. Indian Affairs, Part. I, p. 249. Washington, 1905.

information from their Agent now raises this figure to 795. The 37th degree of latitude forms the northern boundary of their land, while 107° long. passes through the middle of the same. This reservation comprises 447  $\frac{1}{2}$  square miles.

5th. Then far into the east, just north of Texas, within Oklahoma, two more bands of Apaches are to be found under the control of the representatives of the United States. These are the Chiricahua Apaches at Fort Sill, who number 298, and the Kiowa Apaches, in the Kiowa Agency, who muster only 156.

Lastly, the latest Report of the Commissioner for Indian Affairs mentions the Havasupai, "a part of the Bluewater band of Apaches<sup>1</sup>", who are officially estimated at 207 souls; but the Déné nationality of that band is not fully established.

Without taking into account this small aggregate of doubtful Dénés, or even a few independent bands of genuine Apaches, this division of our aborigines gives us a total of 6068 souls. The group should be more populous; yet, after the bitter wars and bloody massacres which have decimated their ranks, it is a wonder that there are so many left.

### Distribution of the Navahoes.

We now come to what is probably the most interesting, and certainly one of the most important, of all the aboriginal tribes north of Mexico. I mean the Navahoes (*Diné*), who, in point of numbers, are surpassed by only one Indian nation, the Cherokee, within the same territory. In fact, they constitute about one-tenth of the entire native population of the United States, and their present reservation exceeds in extent that of any other tribe without exception. It contains fully 18.616 square miles, being, therefore, considerably more than one-third larger than the whole area of Belgium<sup>2</sup>. The tribe is homogeneous, but, for purposes of administration, its territory is divided into five notable portions as follows:

6th. The Fort Defiance Agency, which comprises the southeastern part of the whole reservation, as it stands to-day. On this more or less barren land some 12,000 Navaho Dénés are reported to live.

7th. Immediately north of this is the San Juan Agency with about 7000 Indians. It comprises an area of 5000 square miles or thereabouts, 2000 of which lie in northwestern New Mexico, 2250 in northeastern Arizona, and 750 in the southeastern portion of Utah.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 154. In 1858 the Apaches were supposed to be divided into eight bands, viz. "the Mescaleros, the Mimbres, the Mogolones, the Chincahui, the Coyoteros, the Pinals, the Cero-Colorados, and the Tontos" ("The Marvellous Country", p. 83, Boston, 1873).

<sup>2</sup> These figures include the land within the Navaho Reservation which, though specially devoted to the Hopis, is half peopled by Navahoes.

8th. Adjoining partly the San Juan Agency and partly the Moqui (or Hopi) reservation, within Arizona, and to the west of both, is the Western Navaho Agency, which supports a population of 6000 Dénés.

9th. As shown on the accompanying map, the Moqui reservation is entirely surrounded by Navaho land. The Hopis, commonly called Moquis, are not Déné; but within the same area supposedly reserved for their exclusive benefit are also to be found 1865 Navahoes.

10th. On November 14, 1901, the Government of the United States set apart for still other Navahoes a large piece of land contiguous to the Moqui and part of the Western Navaho reservations, and south thereof. This now forms a minor Agency, which extends on both banks of the Little Colorado River. According to the officer in charge, this addition to the original Navaho land contains about 100 families "with something over 250 children<sup>1</sup>". If we take into consideration widows and widowers, together with unmarried people of either sex, we will easily obtain a total of 500 persons therefor.

This gives us a grand total of 27.365 for the single Navaho tribe, exclusive of 41 children studying at the Santa Fe Industrial School, and 75 in a similar position at Fort Lewis, Colorado. Nor do these figures include a band of 170 Navahoes now stationed among the Pueblos of New Mexico, near Albuquerque.

If official figures are at all to be relied on, the movement of the Navaho population within the last fifty years has certainly been very satisfactory. When the nation first came under the control of the United States, it numbered about 12.000 souls, with some 2500 warriors<sup>2</sup>. In 1869, its numbers were computed at 13.000; but, twenty years later, they had already increased, according to local Agents, to 21.000 souls. Furthermore, vital statistics showed that this numeric augmentation was not due to outside accessions, since the year 1888 had returned 1400 births against 700 deaths<sup>3</sup>. To-day, as we have seen, they muster 27.000 or thereabouts, unless the estimates of some Agents be greatly exaggerated<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Report of the Commissioner Indian Affairs, p. 145. Washington, 1905. It is therefore somewhat puzzling to find in the very volume which publishes that Report the same population stated (p. 594) to be only 344.

<sup>2</sup> Horatio Hale, in "Language as a Test of Mental Capacity". Trans. Roy. Soc. Canada, vol. IX, p. 90.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Owing to their nomadic habits, their state of independence as a self-supporting tribe and the immense topographical difficulties proper to their country, no satisfactory census has ever been taken of the Navahoes. For that reason the figures quoted as representing their population have greatly varied. Dr. W. Matthews says ("Navaho Legends", p. 7) that in 1869 they were less than 9000. Yet he admits that in 1890 the U. S. census, which was taken as systematically as possible, raised the figures to 17.204, and he adds: "All who have an intimate knowledge of the Navahoes agree that they have increased rapidly since they were

When first known to history, the Navahoes occupied the country on the San Juan River and south thereof, in the northern parts of New Mexico and Arizona, and extended into Colorado and Utah. They were then surrounded by Apaches on all sides, except in the north, where they met the Shoshonean tribes<sup>1</sup>. If we are to credit S. W. Cozzens, an American who related more or less truthfully his adventures among the Apaches in a book he called "Marvellous Country"<sup>2</sup>, the Navahoes claimed in 1858 all the land extending from the Rio Grande to the Colorado of the west, including as to-day the villages of the Hopis.

### Erroneous Identifications.

Before going further, I may be warranted in offering a few remarks on the various and, in the light of the results achieved by the latest linguistic researches, rather ludicrous attempts of several writers at determining the racial identity of both Navahoes and Apaches. J. D. Baldwin sees in the former nothing but transformed communities of Pueblos, a most sedentary people, or rather peoples, since the natives thus denominated belong to more than one distinct aboriginal stock. He is so well informed in this respect that he even expressly declares that their present roaming condition is the permanent result of their "fleeing to the mountains from the Spaniards"<sup>3</sup>, a statement which is nothing short of ridiculous.

Gregg, another American writer, clearly recognizes in the Navahoes descendants of the Aztecs. Unfortunately for his theory, there is more difference between the language of the Navahoes and that of the Aztecs than between, for instance, English and Russian. The culture of the two nations is marked by a still greater diversity.

W. E. Bell, though as little self-committing as possible, is inclined to assimilate them to what he calls the townbuilders, i. e. the Pueblos. He

restored to their ancient homes in 1869". On the other hand, W. E. Bell, writing in 1869, says that "their number, twenty years ago, was probably about twelve thousand" ("New Tracks in North America", vol. I, p. 179). Nay, as early as 1846, Governor Ch. Bent estimated them at about fourteen thousand souls, and remarked that they were then "the only nation on the continent, having intercourse with white men, that is increasing in numbers" (*Ibid., ibid.*, p. 180). From 1846 to 1863 the Navahoes passed through a series of wars with the United States, which finally resulted in a sort of captivity for the majority of the tribe. They claim that this last condition noticeably thinned their ranks; but Dr. Matthews avers himself that nothing has been found in official reports to corroborate their assertions to that effect.

These considerations will, I think, help the reader to accept my own figures, which I admit are far in excess of those of any ethnologist. They are compiled from official reports, checked by the results of private enquiries, and declared "pretty correct" by one of the officials on the largest of their reservations.

<sup>1</sup> J. W. Powell, VII Ann. Rep. Bureau of Ethnology, p. 54.

<sup>2</sup> Boston, 1873, p. 129.

<sup>3</sup> "Ancient America", pp. 68 and 74.

claims that they say themselves they are related thereto, which, of course, cannot be admitted as regards the tribe taken as a whole.

Others identify them with the would-be Toltecs of old. Even Father Petitot had rather heterodox ideas on this subject when he wrote in his *Monographie des Déné-Dinjîè*: "The Nabajos are, as is well known, one of the four Apache tribes which inhabit the Indian villages called Pueblos in New Mexico . . . If I dared formulate an opinion, I would even say that the Nabajos and the Tanos, a related nation, are as foreign to the rest of the Apaches, the Piros, the Tegwas and the Kwères, to the Zuñi and the Moqui, as the Sarcis, another Déné tribe on the Upper Saskatchewan, are ethnically different from the Blackfeet, among whom they live and who have adopted them"<sup>1</sup>.

After the information presented in this and the preceding chapters, it is hardly necessary to point out where the erudite author is mistaken. Suffice it to remark that the Pueblos have absolutely no ethnographical affinity with the Navahoes, and that the latter have not one single village, numerous though they are. The Taños form by themselves a distinct aboriginal family, and Tegwa is but another name for the same, or rather their language. The Kwères are evidently the Keras, a Pueblo tribe of a still different stock, while the Piros are supposed to be related to the Taños. Needless to add that none of them has the slightest ethnic relationship with the Déné Apaches.

Fr. Petitot wrote in 1876, at a time when Déné ethnography was hardly more than a negligible quantity. Moreover, his statements on the subject under review have more the character of incidental remarks than of *ex professo* declarations. But what are we to think of a didactic work such as the *Columbian Cyclopaedia*, which, after the researches and published studies of the American ethnographers, is so shamefully ignorant as to say that the Navahoes are "the most northerly of the great Shoshone and Apache family of Indians", as if the Shoshones and the Apaches were ethnically kinsmen, or the Navahoes had any racial affinity with the former, who but lately were their hereditary enemies?

The above fanciful ethnic derivations are aptly recapitulated, if not improved upon, by a still later author, J. H. Beadle, who, in his "Western Wilds", asserts, p. 272, that the Navahoes, whom he incidentally terms the Romans of New Mexico, are a branch of the ancient Mexican Indians who, after the conquest by the Spaniards, finally coalesced with an Athabascan tribe, the

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<sup>1</sup> p. XVII. It cannot be denied that, outside of his own special field, which is the north-eastern Dénés, Petitot had very erroneous notions concerning the extent of that family. Thus in a footnote to p. XLIV of this same work, he bungles together with the Babines and other undoubtedly Déné tribes the Atnans, the Spuzzums, the Shoushouapes, the Koutanés, etc., people who are as little Déné as the Chinese. Moreover, Spuzzum is the name, not of a tribe, but of a small Salish village on the Fraser.

kindred, he gravely avers, "of the Shoshonees, Comanches, Apaches and Arapahoes". This is indeed American ethnology revised with a vengeance!

### The Pacific Dénés.

Ascending to the northwest, away from Apaches and Navahoës, we come upon those stragglers, mere remnants of the Déné migrating body, whom we have already mentioned. Such as are still extant are in the main simply debris of former tribes, now with more or less mixed blood. They form separate villages with no political ties, though they sometimes united against a common enemy. Most of them were identified by Stephen Powers<sup>1</sup>, though some, like the Umpquas, for instance, had previously been recognized as Dénés by Latham<sup>2</sup>, while Gibbs had found out the Dénés in what is now the State of Washington as far back as 1855.

From south to north they are, or were till a comparatively late date:

11th. The Saiaz, who "formerly occupied the tongue of land jutting down between Eel River and Van Dusen's Fork"<sup>3</sup>, by the northwest coast of California.

12th. Somewhat to the northeast, the Kenesti, who live on Dobbins and Larrabie Creeks; along Eel and Mad Rivers, extending down the latter about to Low Gap, and from north Eel River, above Round Valley, to Hay Fork<sup>4</sup>.

13th. The Hupas, who have remained the most autonomous of the whole group, probably because segregated in a reserve of their own. This lies within a beautiful valley, six miles long by one in width, drained by the lower Trinity River, in Humboldt County, California. So secluded are these people in their valley home, that, according to Dr. P. E. Goddard<sup>5</sup>, as late as sixty years ago they had not yet heard of the coming of the whites. In 1866 their population was put down at 650; in 1891 J. W. Powell stated that it numbered only 468. To-day they muster but 450 souls, with nearly equal birth and death rates.

14th. West of the Hupas, are the Redwood Indians, the Whilkût of Powers, the Haitlkut of Goddard. These aborigines have some intercourse with the Hupas, and speak a slightly purer Déné dialect. Their habitat is along the middle part of Redwood Creek and the Bald Hills, between that stream and the Klamath River.

15th. North of them are, in the northwest corner of California, a few remnants of Déné villages extending from the mouth of the Klamath to Smith River.

<sup>1</sup> Contributions to N. Amer. Ethnology, vol. III. Washington, 1877.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Richardson's "Arctic Searching Exploration", vol. II, p. 32.

<sup>3</sup> Contributions to North American Ethnology, vol. III, p. 122.

<sup>4</sup> Powell's "Indian Linguistic Families", Seventh Annual Report Bur. of Ethnology, p. 54.

<sup>5</sup> "Life and Culture of the Hupa", p. 8. Berkeley, 1903—1904.

16th. Further north still are, in Oregon, the Siletz reservation by the sea coast and the Grande Ronde reservation, immediately to the northeast. The 45th degree of latitude passes through both reserves, which are contiguous at the apices of their northeast and southwest angles. In the former about one-half of the natives, say 280, are of Déné parentage. In the latter are now stationed 82 Umpqua Dénés and 52 Rogue River Indians belonging to the same race. The original lands of these fragments of tribes extended from their present seats south to the California frontier.

17th. Much confusion exists as to the Dénés of the State of Washington. Powell enumerates three bands, namely, the Kwalhioqua, the Owlapsh, and the Tlascanai. He then quotes Gibbs as to the migrations of the latter, thereby conveying the impression that he was writing after that pioneer ethnographer. But Gibbs counts only two tribes, the first of which he calls "the Willopah (Kwaliokwa), or, as they call themselves, Owhillapsh"<sup>1</sup>. On the other hand, Dr. F. Boas assures us that Owhillapsh "is the name of the Chinook tribe of the Lower Willopah River"<sup>2</sup>, while the Déné band dwelt on the upper course of the same. This assertion, therefore, would find both Gibbs and Powell at fault. But now comes Dr. Goddard who, after telling us that there were probably five distinct dialects within the Pacific Déné group, mentions "the Kwalhioqua and Willopah" as the one spoken in Washington. As Kwaliokwa is the name of the Indians and Willopah that of their habitat, it would seem as if the tribes in that State were now reduced to one<sup>3</sup>. This is indeed a case of *scinduntur doctores*.

As, however, all the other authors<sup>4</sup> speak of at least one other cognate tribe as being located within the same political division, I think the only course open to me is to class the Washington Dénés, now mostly extinct, into two small groups: the Kwaliokwas and the Klatskanais. The former occupied the upper Willopah River and its tributaries towards the head of the Chehalis. The latter dwelt on the banks of a small stream on the northwest side of Wapto Island, though they also resorted to the mountains on the south side of the Columbia. In 1855 three or four families of Kwaliokwas were still found above the forks of the Chehalis<sup>5</sup>, but the Klatskanais were even then "nearly extinct".

The chief interest these small bands offer to the ethnologist is derived from the fact that they were, within United States territory, the nearest to the northern Dénés whom we have studied in our last chapter. Gibbs says that they were "of the Tahkali (Carrier) stock, though divided by nearly six

<sup>1</sup> Contributions to N. A. Ethnology, p. 171.

<sup>2</sup> Tenth Report on the N. W. tribes of Canada, p. 67.

<sup>3</sup> Above statement is from a Dictionary article now ready for the press, copy of which Dr. G. has kindly sent me.

<sup>4</sup> And Dr. G. himself elsewhere.

<sup>5</sup> Contrib. to N. A. Ethnol., vol. I, p. 171.

degrees of latitude from the parent tribe”<sup>1</sup>. His vocabulary of their dialect, which Dr. Boas published some years ago<sup>2</sup>, betrays more affinities with the idiom of the Chilcotins than with that of any other tribe. It makes it quite clear that those Déné remnants had, in the far north, nearer kinsmen west than east of the Rocky Mountains.

The total of the known Pacific Dénés does not to-day exceed 865<sup>3</sup>.

### The Connecting Link between South and North.

The last mentioned survivors of the original Déné stragglers on, or near, the Pacific lived by about 48° N. lat. Scarcely more than one degree further north, within British Columbia, we find the last link, just disappeared but well remembered, which connected the southern with the northern Dénés. As there can be no reasonable doubt that this was a Chilcotin colony from the north, and because that circumstance is a new confirmation of my theory concerning the southward tendency of the family, the question of its origin and ethnic personality is not without importance to the ethnologist.

The late Dr. G. M. Dawson was the first to give an account of that latest of the Déné migrations. According to information he received from a reliable party<sup>4</sup>, it appears that “a long time before the white man first came to the country” (1858), a band of Chilcotins having undertaken, in company with their wives and some children, a war expedition against the Salish of the Lower Thompson, were led by the absence of those they had expected to surprise as far south as the mouth of the Nicola River. There they were discovered, and soon after intercepted by a strong force of Thompson Indians. Which perceiving, the intruding marauders took to flight and ascended the Nicola valley till they reached the Similkameen, where they presented a bold front to their pursuers, who, noticing that the wives of the strangers “were larger and better looking than their own”<sup>5</sup>, finally made peace and intermarried with them.

As late as 1888 eight men with some women and children, descendants of that band, still remained in the Nicola valley. They claimed to own the country by right of first occupancy, declaring that the other Indians there were late arrivals on their land. One of the eight men personally told

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid., ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> Tenth Report on the N. W. Tribes of Canada. B. A. A. S.

<sup>3</sup> Nothing will be more conducive towards a proper estimate of the great strides which ethnological science has made within the last half century than a perusal of Latham’s apology for a classification of the Déné tribes, such as contained in his “Ethnology of the British Colonies”, pp. 224—227, London, 1851. Then, again, instead of “full nineteen-twentieths of the Athabaskan population being British as he says, almost two-thirds of it live under the Stars and Stripes.

<sup>4</sup> Mr. Mackay, Indian Agent, a man quite conversant with Indian affairs.

<sup>5</sup> “Notes on the Shushwap People of B. C.”. Trans. Roy. Soc. Canada, p. 24, 1891.

Dr. Dawson that the language of his ancestors — only a few words of which he could remember — was the same as that of the Chilcotins<sup>1</sup>. In 1895 there were only three survivors of the eight men referred to by Dr. Dawson.

As part of the information recorded by that gentleman conflicted with reports received by Dr. F. Boas, the latter then sent to investigate the case Mr. Jas. Teit who has mastered the language of the natives of that region. From some of the three old aborigines he gathered that, four generations back, the tribe was divided into three camps or lodges, and that there were not many people in each<sup>2</sup>. Those people had, moreover, two fortified houses in which they took refuge when attacked. The old man mentioned as aggressors, who were successfully repulsed, parties of Okanagan, Thompson and Shushwap Indians. Those skirmishes, he added, took place three or four generations before his own time. Mr. Teit remarks that his informants were "quite indignant" when he hinted at the possibility of their being of Chilcotin origin.

This leads Dr. Boas to the conclusion that, while the band was undoubtedly Déné, the theory that they were the descendants of a Chilcotin war party "seems very unlikely". I beg to differ entirely from the learned ethnographer's opinion on this point. The short lists of words from the language spoken by the original settlers of the valley collected by Dawson, Mackay and Teit contain a few terms which are foreign to the Dénés, many which are common to the Carriers and the Chilcotins, and several which are distinctively Chilcotin. Not one is proper to either the Carrier, the Babine or the Sékanaïs dialects. *Nut*, for instance, is a word which means, not man as stated, but animal, in no dialect but the Chilcotin; *tet'-hutz*, which Dawson regards as synonymous with man, is evidently no other than *tæyoniz*, which has that signification (*vir* or *masculinus*, not *homo*) in Chilcotin exclusively, and the term variously spelt *sis-ya-nē'*, *si-si-aney* and *sæ-sia'ni* is as certainly the Chilcotin *séshyan* (pronounced *séshyan*), which means ram of the mountain sheep only in that dialect.

The pious horror at the suggestion that they might have Chilcotin blood in their veins manifested by Teit's informants, who are admitted to have been three-quarters Salish, is easily explained by the bad reputation the Chilcotins enjoy among the natives of British Columbia, especially since five of them were publicly hanged for their participation in the massacre of eighteen white men. In fact, it is more natural under the circumstances than a ready acknowledgement of such kinship.

As a recapitulation of the foregoing information, we will now present the reader with a table of all

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> Tenth Rep. on the N. W. Tribes of Canada, p. 31.

## The Déné Tribes, with Habitats and Population.

(Northern Division.)

### Alaskan Dénés.

1. <i>Kaiyuh-kho'-tenne</i> , near Norton Sound . . . . .	2,000
2. <i>Koyukuk-kho'-tenne</i> , above No. 1, N. bank of Yukon and Koyukuk R. . . . .	500
3. <i>Yuna-kho'-tenne</i> , lefft side of Yukon to Tanana River . . . . .	
4. <i>Tenan-kut'qin</i> , Tanan River . . . . .	400
5. <i>Kut'qa-kut'qin</i> , Yukon from Birch R. to Kotlo R. . . . .	250
6. <i>Natsit-kut'qin</i> , from Fort Yukon to Romanoff Mountains . . . . .	150
7. <i>Væn-kut'qin</i> , E. of No. 6. S. of Eskimos . . . . .	400
8. <i>Dakaze</i> , between source of Porcupine R. and Fort McPherson . . . . .	
9. <i>Han-kut'qin</i> , Yukon above Kotlo River . . . . .	
10. <i>Tutchone-kut'qin</i> , Yukon from Deer R. to Fort Selkirk . . . . .	1,100
11. <i>Tehanin-kut'qin</i> , from Upper Yukon to W. Eskimos . . . . .	500
12. <i>Thét'tét-kut'qin</i> , Peel River . . . . .	
13. <i>Nakotšo-ondjig-kut'qin</i> , Lower Mackenzie River . . . . .	
14. <i>Kwí'qa-kut'qin</i> , between Lower Mackenzie and Anderson R. . . . .	
Total . . .	5,300

### Subarctic Dénés.

15. Hares, W. of Great Bear Lake to Eskimos . . . . .	600
16. Dog-Ribs, E. of Hares to Back River . . . . .	1,150
17. Slaves, W. of Great Slave L. from Fort Simpson to Fort Norman . . . . .	1,100
18. Yellow-Knives, N. E. of Gt. Slave Lake including Coppermine R. . . . .	500
Total . . .	3,350

### Eastern Dénés.

19. Cariboo-Eaters, E. of L. Athabaska, L. Cariboo, L. Axe, etc. . . . .	1,700
20. Athabaskans, L. Athabaska . . . . .	
21. Chippewayans, S. of L. Athabaska . . . . . (with preceding)	4,000
Total . . .	5,700

### Intermediate Dénés.

22. Sheep-People, Rocky Mountains, near No. 12 . . . . .	100
23. Mountain Indians, Rocky Mountains, by about 65 N. lat. . . . .	300
24. <i>Tsé-loh-ne</i> , Liard R. immediately E. of Rocky Mountains . . . . .	350
25. Nahanais, Stickine S. and N., and E. beyond the Rocky Mountains . . . . .	1,000
26. Beavers, Peace River E. of Rocky Mountains almost to L. Athabaska . . . . .	700
27. Sarcees, Govt., Reserve, S. S. W. of Calgary, Alberta . . . . .	190
28. Sékanais, Finlay and Parsnip RR., and W. to Forks of Tatla L. . . . .	450
Total . . .	3,090

### Western Dénés.

29. Babines, L. Babine, Bulkley R. and S. of latter. . . . .	530
30. Carriers, from Forks of Tatla L. S. to Fort Alexandria . . . . .	970
31. Chilcotins, Chilcotin R., N. and S. to 51° 30'. . . . .	450
Total . . .	1,950
Total Northern Division . . .	19,390

## (Southern Division.)

## Apaches.

1. Mescalero Agency, New Mexico . . . . .	501
2. San Carlos Agency, Arizona . . . . .	2,222
3. Independent Band at Angora, Arizona . . . . .	38
4. Fort Apache Agency, Arizona . . . . .	2,058
5. Jicarilla Agency, New Mexico . . . . .	795
6. Chiricahua Apaches, Oklahoma . . . . .	298
7. Kiowa Apaches, Oklahoma . . . . .	156
Total . . .	6,068

## Navahoes.

8. Fort Defiance Agency, New Mexico and Arizona . . . . .	12,000
9. San Juan Agency, New Mexico, Arizona and Utah . . . . .	7,000
10. Western Navaho Agency, Arizona . . . . .	6,000
11. Moqui Agency, Arizona . . . . .	1,865
12. Navaho Extension, Arizona . . . . .	500
Total . . .	27,365

## Pacific Dénés.

13. Saiaz, between Eel R. and Van Dusen's Fork, California . . . . .	—
14. Kenesti, to the N. E. of Saiaz, California . . . . .	—
15. Hupas, Lower Trinity River . . . . .	450
16. Redwood Dénés, Redwood Creek and the Bald Hills, California . . . . .	—
17. Northwest Californian Bands, between Klamath and Smith RR. . . . .	—
18. Siletz Reservation, Oregon . . . . .	280
19. Grande Ronde Reservation, Oregon . . . . .	134
20. Washington Dénés, State of Washington . . . . .	(Extinct)
Total known Pac. Dénés . . .	864
Total Southern Division . . .	34,297
Grand Total Déné Nation . . .	53,687

## CHAPTER IV.

**Physical characteristics of the Dénés.****Features common to the whole Nation.**

One of the chief aims of the late Dr. D. G. Brinton's book "The American Race" would almost seem to be a preoccupation to justify its title, which implies a physiological homogeneity for the various nations that people the western hemisphere. With that end in view an effort is made to reconcile antagonistic traits, linguistic as well as physical or cultural, and the most essential differences are cleverly minimized. Thus, for instance, the recognized superiority of the pre-Columbian inhabitants of Peru and Mexico is artfully depreciated and, under the pen of the learned author, the aboriginal empires of central America, with their palaces, their temples and monumental edifices, as well as their elaborate social and political organizations, become little more than hordes of Indians but slightly above the mental level of the wild tribes of the north. The physiological points of contrast are similarly softened down, and even the Eskimos, for instance, are in his estimation nothing else than a division of the red race, just as the Sioux, the Aztecs, or the Patagonians.

I have more than once put on record my own protest against granting too great an importance to physical features, or even anthropometric peculiarities in our ethnic classifications of mankind. Yet, one cannot help remarking that, within the fold of what Dr. Brinton called the American Race, very striking diversities of type do certainly exist which, in many cases, correspond to linguistic, and therefore genuinely racial, particularities. Even a limited acquaintance with the original inhabitants of our continent will reveal a notable difference between, for instance, the delicate and narrow facies of the Iroquois and the broad and flattish features of the Plains Indians.

Owing to the wide diffusion of the aboriginal family it represents, the Déné facial type cannot pretend to perfect uniformity. Commerce with adjoining allophylic stocks and consequent comingling of blood have in many cases considerably altered it. But numerous are still the tribal divisions of the race which have remained typically aboriginal, and a person, however little conversant he may be with anthropometry, will, with time and reasonable obser-

vation, easily recognize the Déné features even in the southermost representatives of the nation<sup>1</sup>.

From a close study and critical analysis of the physique prevailing among the various tribes of the north, especially the intermediate divisions where the purest specimens of the stock are naturally to be found, the original Déné tribes can easily be described as follows:

Stature above the average; hands and feet small; limbs lithe and slender; trunk erect and devoid of any exaggeration of adipose tissue; facies oval and gradually tapering from the cheek bones to the chin; index varying from extreme brachycephaly to moderate dolichocephaly; forehead often receding, though at times the facial angle appears as wide as in the case of the Caucasian race; eyes black<sup>2</sup> and rather small in men, and deeply sunk beneath quite pronounced superciliary ridges; glabella fairly prominent and occasionally wrinkled even in young people; nose long and straight or aquiline, abnormally broad at the base and with a septum that slightly projects beyond the nostrils; malar bones moderately high; cheeks thin and stretched; mouth more often wide than otherwise, with lips rather thin, of which the lower one slightly protrudes; chin sometimes narrow, but as often broad and inclined to turn up; ears small and elegant.

The hair is invariably dark, coarse and straight in both sexes. None is found under the armpits, and little on any other part of the body except the pubes and the face. Facial hair seldom appears before full maturity, and what grows of it is almost uniformly black, brittle and far between, while many male adults remain to their death entirely devoid of any. As to the complexion, it varies between a swarthy brown with the bands of hunters and a sallow white among the more sedentary tribes. As a rule, it is lighter than that of the majority of American aborigines.

### The Physique of the Northern Dénés.

This description is, I believe, as exact as possible with regard to the original or more prevalent Déné type. But the anthropologist desirous of realising fully the physical evolution consequent on particular environment, mode of life or commiscegenation will, no doubt, be pleased to read of the many tribal peculiarities noticeable in the family. He is therefore invited to follow me in a brief survey of the physiological characteristics of the principal Déné tribes.

<sup>1</sup> I never had an opportunity to attempt cranial or facial measurements. Yet, when lately a set of photographs purporting to represent none but Déné Indians were submitted to my inspection, I immediately picked out as being non-Déné two men thereby illustrated who, upon enquiry, proved to belong to the Assiniboin tribe, though their portraits were labelled Déné.

<sup>2</sup> So black indeed that in young children even the white of the eyes is noticeably tinged with blue, as if this was a reflection of the intensely black colour of the iris.

From the viewpoint of bodily perfection, the Loucheux will undoubtedly be found to be the best specimens of the human species within the fold of the nation under study. The fact that, judging by their geographical position, they are probably the last comers into the American continent would seem to prompt the inference that the many privations and roving mode of life resulting from the severity of the climate and their unfamiliarity with agricultural pursuits have been detrimental to the physical welfare of their race. The inland Loucheux are materially among the purest and least adulterated representative Dénés. They are tall and well formed. Indeed Isbiter calls them "an athletic and fine looking race, considerably above the average stature, most of them being upwards of six feet in height and remarkably well proportioned... Their countenances are handsome and pleasing, and capable of great expression<sup>1</sup>". Their foreheads are high, their eyes sparkling, and their complexion quite fair for American Indians. Whymper regards the western Loucheux as "a fine stout race<sup>2</sup>". In connection with the same, Dall occasionally speaks of "very fine looking" women<sup>3</sup>, and Richardson's informant on that aboriginal group instances "the wife of one of the chiefs as being so handsome that, setting aside the Indian garb and tattooed face, she would have been considered a fine woman in any country<sup>4</sup>".

Their neighbours to the south, and east of the Rocky Mountains, cannot boast such a fine physique. They are generally brachycephalic, with an inferior facial angle, prominent cheek bones, noses of a rather aquiline type, though always abnormally broad at the base. Their mouths are wide and furnished with well set and very white teeth, an accomplishment which is shared by the whole family. Their lips, generally too long, give them a prognathic appearance, when they are not ungracefully parted, leaving the mouth open, while their chins are sometimes pointed, slightly curved up and occasionally receding, especially in cases of real prognathism.

The Dog-Ribs and the Slaves met by Alexander Mackenzie were "a meagre, ugly, ill-made people, particularly about the legs, which are very clumsy and covered with scabs<sup>5</sup>". Altogether, the impression their appearance made on the great explorer was unfavourable. They also seemed to be rather unhealthy, owing mostly to their want of cleanliness. As a rule, their facies is of a square oval type, though the greatest width is always across the malar bones.

The representatives of the fair sex are amongst them much less prepossessing than in the extreme northwest. Their features are coarse though kindly, and oftentimes dejected. In female children they are in quite a rudi-

<sup>1</sup> Report of Brit. Ass. for the Adv. of Science, for 1847, p. 122.

<sup>2</sup> "Travel and Adventure in the Territory of Alaska", p. 153.

<sup>3</sup> "Travels on the Yukon", p. 27.

<sup>4</sup> "Arctic Searching Expedition", vol. I, p. 379.

<sup>5</sup> "Voyages from Montreal to the Frozen and Pacific Oceans", vol. I, p. 234.

mentary stage of formation, being chiefly remarkable, perhaps, for their diminutive pug-noses with extraordinarily depressed bridges. As will be seen by the accompanying illustration "Northern Maids", their eyes are sometimes set quite obliquely. Among the Carriers of the far west I know of even more striking examples of that Mongolian characteristic.

But for a regular Mongoloid cast of the entire face we must turn to the more southern tribe of the Sarcees. Owing to its peculiar position among the Blackfeet, this band cannot claim unmixed Déné blood. The face is still oval, especially in the men, but the features are stretched, the facial edges softened down, the lips thicker and more classical, the nose narrower at the nostrils and the cheek bones even more prominent.

### In the West.

In the west a still greater diversity of type coincides with a difference of tribe. Thus all the groups which have commingled with the alien races of the coast, such as the Chilcotins, the Carriers, the Babines and the western Nahanaïs, have almost exchanged the prototypical Déné facies for a roundness of head and face which, in some cases, degenerates into an unbecoming quadrilateral formation. A portion of the Carriers are still above the average in stature, though many of them are quite short. They are stoutly built, with coarse features, thick lips, heavy chins, noses straight but too narrow from the bridge down and too distended at the base, and indices more brachycephalic or at least mesocephalic than otherwise.

The Chilcotins, who are coterminous with them, are of lower stature, broad-chested, with square shoulders, heavy features and flattish faces, while the Babines, who resemble them as to size and height, are remarkable for the rotundity of their heads and the thickness of their lips. There can be no doubt that Carriers and Babines have an appreciable quota of Tsimsian blood in their veins, and the same is as true of the Chilcotins with regard to the Kwakiutl of the west and the Salish of the south. The western Nahanaïs are perhaps of still less homogenous origin, as their facial appearance and language amply testify. In their case the associates in procreation were the Tlinget of the Coast.

On the other hand, the Sékanais, having kept the Déné type less disfigured by commiscegenation with alien stocks, have wiry limbs, fine delicate features, well formed and at times rather high noses, much narrower than with their western congeners, their lips slightly protruding and very small eyes deeply sunk in their sockets. Their size and weight are certainly below the average, though I have seen several men among them who were over six feet in height, and some women who were proportionately tall.

Obesity, as a rule, is unknown among all the Déné tribes, as is also baldness. It is therefore not a little strange that the ranks of the slender

Sékanais should contain the only really fat Déné woman who ever came to my notice. I have also seen one or two cases of incipient calvities in the midst of the Babines and the Carriers. This is a sort of infirmity scarcely more relished by the Dénés than by the Jews of old.

It must also be remarked that white hair is very much less frequent among them than with us. It is considered a token of physical and mental inferiority or deterioration. On that score, it is quite at a discount in all the tribes. Indeed, any person afflicted with that sign of decay has lost all rights to the respect of its fellows. Taya, the Carrier chief whose picture I present to my readers, had scarcely a gray hair at eighty, and on that account his influence in the west was more than double that of an elder brother, who was the chief of another locality, but whose hair had turned of a pronounced gray.

Cheek or chin dimples are not common in any tribe, but are occasionally to be found, especially among the women. The latter, among the Nahanaïs of the west, are chiefly remarkable for the lightness of their complexion, which in some cases is not far from rosy. The maximum stature in that tribe is about 5 feet 8 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches; maximum girth about the chest, 37 inches. The arms of the Nahanaïs are rather light and their heads smaller than is usual on the coast.

With the Dénés of the Pacific States of the American Union, the true Déné type seems to have been better preserved among the men than among the women. Even with the former, however, the malar bones project more sensibly in front of the face than in the north, causing a tension of the features which greatly alters the facial expression.

### Among the Southern Dénés.

The same is true of the Navahoes, whose women, to judge from the many photographs at my disposal, have generally a sterner appearance, more rounded faces and less sharp features than their sisters in the north. The woman shown with the babe, for instance, hardly appears to me as a Déné type at all, while the one squatting in the foreground of the group forming our next illustration seems quite an old acquaintance of mine. The male Navaho type is probably best represented by the photograph reproduced in the first chapter of this work. The figures of "Big Queue" and "Man-Killer" are also good specimens of their class.

However, the tribe is too populous, even barring the well known cause of authenticated exogamic unions in times past, to present a severely uniform Navaho type with representatives cast in the same mould. In the words of Fr. Leopold, "there are tall, athletic men with bronze skin, aquiline noses, clear cut features, piercing eyes and bold carriage, such as we read of; and small men with subdued, rounded features, light brown or light yellow skin

and noses almost approaching the pug. Between these two extremes there is every intermediate variety of color and contour. Some faces remind one very strongly of the Tartars, or the Japanese"<sup>1</sup>.

Yet, compared with their northern kin, I think we may say that adult Navahoes have, in a majority of cases, broader and much more prominent maxillary bones, more pointed noses and a more determined and intelligent expression than the northern Dénés. Their children, even when very young, have features less embryotic, noses better developed and foreheads somewhat higher, with glabellæ lower than is common with children of corresponding age in the north.

According to Dr. A. Hrdlicka<sup>2</sup>, the men range in height from 162·4 to 183·0 cm. and the women from 148·4 to 166·3 cm. In most cases the head is flattened posteriorly, though not as a result of intentional deforming practices. This is due to the pressure of a small pad used on the baby-board as a head-rest. The same cause produces the same effect on the Apaches. In spite of this it is plain that the Navahoes are as a whole naturally brachycephalic.

The face of the Navahoes betrays a moderate prognathism. To quote from the same authority's anthropometric description of that tribe "the nose measures in men 5·38 cm., in women 5·0 cm. in length, and 4·0 cm. and 3·6 cm. respectively in width, and shows fair height. The malars are generally somewhat prominent. The average height of the face to nasion in men is 12·0, in women 11·3 cm.; to the hair line, in men 18·9, in women 17·76 cm.; the diameter of the bizygomatic maxillary in men is 14·7, in women 13·8 cm."<sup>3</sup>.

Dr. Hrdlicka remarks also that, in the same tribe, the colour of the hair is frequently brownish or rusty, but that this may be due to exposure to the rays of the sun, or to frequent shampooing of the head with suds made from yucca root, adding that "in the young the hair is invariably jet-black". Now it seems a little strange that just the reverse is true of the northern Dénés. Among them the children have not unfrequently brownish hair, but this in all cases turns to a deep black with age. As to the beard, though it is very generally of an intensely dark colour, I know of quite a few cases among the Babines, for instance, when it is of an almost blond hue in individuals whose full-bloodedness cannot be doubted.

### Sexual Characteristics.

Adolescent Navahoes are generally somewhat more advanced towards maturity than whites of a corresponding age. The outward signs of puberty seem slower to appear in the north, and the development of the breasts and

<sup>1</sup> The Catholic Pioneer, Nov., 1905, pp. 12–13.

<sup>2</sup> "Physical and Physiological Observations on the Navaho". American Anthropologist, vol. II, p. 341.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid., ibid.*

pelves in the females is usually very gradual among the northern tribes. In some cases the enlargement of the mammae never takes place.

This reminds me of the wild statements which have occasionally found their way in the works of even reputable authors with regard to the extraordinary dimensions attained by that part of the female anatomy among the American and other primitive races. Some of these assertions would indeed task the credulity of the most simple minded scholar. Thus we read in Hakluyt's Collection<sup>1</sup> that the breasts of some women are so long that the latter have to lay them on the ground and lie down by them. Bruce asserts that in some of the Shangallas they hang down to the knees. Mentzelius tells us that purses are made in great numbers from the breasts of the Hottentot females, and sold at the Cape of Good Hope<sup>2</sup>. Of the Carrier women Harmon says that they nurse their children while these are suspended at their backs "either by throwing their breasts over their shoulders or under their arms"<sup>3</sup>.

Though the above statements savour more or less of exaggeration, there is no doubt that the Déné mammae, especially with women who have borne several children, are very flaccid and pendulous. I can testify to the truth of Harmon's declaration as regards the latter part of the same. As to nursing their children over their shoulders, I have never seen as much; but an identical process is said to have been at least occasionally resorted to even by the women of old Ireland. Lithgow writes: "I saw, in Ireland's north parts, women travayling the way, or toiling at home, carry their infants about their neckes, and laying the dugges over their shoulders, would give sucke to the babes behinde their backs, without taking them in their arms"<sup>4</sup>.

### A Remarkable Physiological Phenomenon.

A case which would seem much less credible than that of the fabulously long mammae of our females, and to which I would not even dare call attention were it not "so well authenticated", as Sir John Franklin assures us, is the following, which I shall quote after him from Richardson's Journal.

"A young Chipewyan had separated from the rest of his band for the purpose of trenching beaver, when his wife, who was his sole companion, and in her first pregnancy, was seized with the pains of labour. She died on the third day after she had given birth to a boy. The husband was inconsolable, and vowed in his anguish never to take another woman to wife, but his grief was soon in some degree absorbed in anxiety for the fate of his infant son. To preserve its life he descended to the office of nurse, so degrading in the eyes of a Chipewyan, as partaking of the duties of a woman. He swaddled

<sup>1</sup> Vol. II, p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> "A Voyage to Hudson's Bay", p. 58.

<sup>3</sup> "An Account of the Indians living west of the Rocky Mountains", p. 273.

<sup>4</sup> "Raire Adventures and Painefull Peregrinations", p. 433.

it in soft moss, fed it with broth made from the flesh of the deer, and to still its cries applied it to his breast, praying earnestly to the great Master of Life, to assist his endeavours. The force of the powerful passion by which he was actuated produced the same effect in his case, as it has done in some others which are recorded: a flow of milk actually took place from his breast. He succeeded in rearing his child, taught him to be a hunter, and when he attained the age of manhood, chose him a wife from the tribe.

"The old man kept his vow in never taking a second wife himself, but he delighted in tending his son's children, and when his daughter-in-law used to interfere, saying that it was not the occupation of a man, he was wont to reply that he had promised to the great Master of Life, if his child were spared, never to be proud, like the other Indians. He used to mention, too, as a certain proof of the approbation of Providence, that, although he was always obliged to carry his child on his back while hunting, yet that it never roused a moose by its cries, being always particulary still at those times. Our informant<sup>1</sup> added that he had often seen this Indian in his old age, and that his left breast, even then, retained the unusual size it had acquired in his occupation of nurse"<sup>2</sup>.

This story will appear less incredible if we reflect that the lactiferous glands are of the same nature in both sexes, and remember the case of a drum major in Napoleon's army, who concealed under a flowing beard breasts whose length betrayed the use to which they had been put.

Cases of hermaphrodisim, real or apparent, are to the best of my knowledge unknown among the Dénés<sup>3</sup>. So are authentic cases of albinism, though individuals, generally of the male sex, with tufts of pure white hair do exist even at the present day among the Babines. John G. Bourke mentions also<sup>4</sup> an albino family which, in 1881, lived among the Navahoes, and Fr. Leopold tells me<sup>5</sup> that he saw last year a full blooded youth of that tribe with fair skin and auburn hair.

### The Acuteness of their Senses.

The sensitive faculties of the Dénés are developed in the same ratio as their mental powers seem to be dormant. I remember reading that the keenness of the American aborigines' senses has been greatly exaggerated. He that penned that remark could certainly not have been, like the present writer, travelling for over twenty years with representatives of that race, else he

<sup>1</sup> Mr. W. F. Wentzel.

<sup>2</sup> "Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea", vol. II, 53, *et seq.*

<sup>3</sup> In their legends the Navahoes mention occasionally beings which they call *ndatlí*, a term which the late Dr. Matthews translated by hermaphrodites, for the lack of a better equivalent.

<sup>4</sup> "The Medicine-men of the Apaches", 9th Ann. Rep. Bur. Ethnol., p. 469.

<sup>5</sup> April 2, 1906.

would have totally modified his opinion. A Déné will smell smoke for miles. I do not mean the smoke of a forest fire, of a general conflagration in the woods, but merely that of the lonely native's bivouac in a nook hidden by a river's windings.

His hearing is just as good. A slight rustle in the woods, the breaking of a twig under the feet of game, will immediately startle him, and make him stand in his canoe in order to discover the cause of the noise.

As to his sight, it is that of the eagle. How many times have I not wondered at its incredible acuteness, when, as I explored large lakes or timberless mountains, objects which, with the best of wills, I could not perceive were pointed out to me by hunters who wondered at what they were pleased to call my blindness! It is but fair to remark, however, that the northern Déné is preeminently a huntsman. He cannot travel any distance without being instinctively on the look out for game. His piercing eye is constantly scanning every nook of nature's primeval domain. "See, a grizzly bear passed here last night", or "a cariboo was here two days ago", he will exclaim of a sudden, when your mental energies may be engrossed with the details of a philological or other problem. You look, and see nothing. But the child of the forest has noticed one or two blades of grass slightly bent in the same direction at regular intervals, and he must obey his instinct which bids him follow them and thereby trace out the whereabouts of the game.

His memory is likewise very retentive, especially that form of the faculty which manifests itself in connection with localities. "Here is a twig which was not broken when I passed here last", he will sometimes remark as you painfully trudge along; "somebody bent the head of that sapling; so-and-so [who is known to have preceded on the way months, perhaps years, before] blazed that tree", etc. Hence, it is next to impossible for him to get lost even in the most intricate forest<sup>1</sup>.

If a hunter, the Déné, at least in the north, is also a fisherman. Much of his life, unless he belongs to one of the mountain tribes, is passed in a canoe. There again, the wonderful brightness of his sight serves him in good stead. It delves into the abysmal recesses of the lakes, wherein he locates fish which is perceptible to nobody but himself. It reaches the very bottom of rivers, muddy or rapid as may be their waters, and detects rocks or other obstacles to navigation, which he dexterously avoids in the swiftest currents.

The acuity of the Dénés' senses is on a par with their power over the chords of the heart. Few people have such a control of their emotional faculties. While among themselves they generally preserve a certain decorum, and would not for anything pass for beggars. But they consider that the whites are a fair field for exploitation. With them they will feign to perfection sick-

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<sup>1</sup> For a good example of local memory see Franklin's "Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea" vol. II, p. 25.

ness or starvation, grief or any other situation which they deem most calculated to serve their own interests. Hearne assures us that he "can affirm with truth [he has] seen some of them with one side of the face bathed in tears, while the other has exhibited a significant smile<sup>1</sup>. I cannot say quite as much from personal observation among the western Dénés, but I remember having sometimes been affected by the cries and evident despair of women who were only joking, and burst into laughter as soon as they realized that I was taking them seriously.

### **Limitations of their Visual Faculties.**

In view of this extraordinarily developed state of the senses among them, it is not a little surprising that their sight should be so hampered by dullness when it is a question of colours. It would seem that, in the same way as intellectual subtleties do not appeal to their understanding, even so their senses cannot perceive esthetic differences which are to us primary and essential. They have no use for the fine distinctions of the artist; their mind is concerned almost exclusively with the material and tangible. They will readily take in the size or form of an object, but many important shades in its colour will escape their visual faculties, just as surely as their auditive powers cannot discern any difference between the surd and the sonant sounds — *p* and *b*, *t* and *d*, etc.<sup>2</sup>.

For instance, green and black are the same to the Chippewayans and the Hare Indians, while many other tribes cannot differentiate green from yellow. The Navahoës have no term expressive of the former colour, which they sometimes confound with blue and sometimes render by a periphrasis. And let not the reader attribute this shortcoming to the terminological poverty of their dialects. The simplest of them is incredibly rich, and in most cases counts synonyms or quasi-synonyms by the score. The fault lies entirely with the lack of discrimination or the bluntness of the esthetic perception of their senses.

A proof of this is the circumstance that, though the Carrier's dialect, for instance, is equipped with words for green, blue and yellow, individuals will constantly be found amongst them who mistake the one for the other. Green and yellow, especially, look alike to many of them. Blond hair, also,

<sup>1</sup> "A Journey from Prince of Wales Fort", p. 308.

<sup>2</sup> It has been said that the neolithic Aryans were a pastoral people because, forsooth, their only names for colours were those of the usual colours of the cow. This would leave out green and blue, for which it is contended that their vocabulary did not contain equivalents (Cf. "Origin of the Aryans", by Isaac Taylor, reviewed in Harper's Monthly, Nov., 1890). I cannot help thinking that the same cause, lack of esthetic discrimination, produced among those early peoples the same effect as with the Dénés. If the neolithic Aryans's knowledge of colours was really derived from those prevalent among their cows, why had they no term to express that of their most common feed?

perhaps on account of its novelty to them, is simply white, as are also hazel eyes, though they have special terms for hair which has become white through age and for eyes that are affected by albinism. It is also strange that the same root which means blue in the east (*det'tezi*) is denotive of green in the west (*tælt'læz*). Similarly, *litso*, which is the Navaho for yellow, is used by the Húpas in connection with green or blue.

With practically all the tribes, red, brown, bay, sorrel, russet, pink, rose, scarlet, claret or magenta are the same colour, i. e. red: *tæl'kæen* in Carrier. If remonstrated with, they cannot be any more precise than by stamping said colours as "a little red" (*tæl'kæn-yaz*) or reddish (*utænil'kæn*). Purple, violet, mauve or lilac are called indifferently bluish or reddish by such as are particular in their vocabulary. A majority of speakers would simply say blue or red, according to the way their senses are thereby affected.

And this, I repeat, is by no means the result of linguistic deficiencies. Blind as they seem to be to many shades of a primary colour or even to the differences between two materially distinct hues, their dialects are very particular in differentiating the terms employed according to the proportions of the object thereby qualified. Thus while *tyél*, in Carrier, serves their purpose for any kind of white or whitish tint, the face of an individual which is white or cognately coloured will be called *nælyél*, because it is part of a spheroid; his legs will become *dælyél*, because they are notably longer than wide; his house, *hwolyél*, because of its vastness or comprehensiveness; his kettle, *pehwolyél*, as the colour is inside, and a silver ring, *dænælyél*, on account of its circular shape (rendered by *næ*) and the length of the object for which it is intended (expressed by *dæ*).

Before we leave this subject, we may remark that the Dénés often go so far as to invert the offices of the senses. One would be tempted to say that, in connection with objects in close proximity to the bystander, most of them see through the hands, since the very first thing they do when shown anything new is to feel it with the tips of the fingers. Before that operation they seem unable to pronounce on its merits or demerits.

### Their Fortitude in Times of Distress.

In the south, the Navahoes are reputed so good workers that their services command better wages than those of the Mexicans. As much cannot be said of the northern Dénés. Their powers of endurance are great; but continued exertion for any number of days is beyond their capacity. They quickly tire of any steady work, especially if this entails physical energy. Yet, when it is a question of mere locomotion, to which their early education has accustomed them and on which their very life greatly depends, there is not a white man, nay, hardly a horse, that would be a match for them. This is chiefly true of the Sékanais and other intermediate Dénés, whose proficiency in travelling, loaded with their camping outfits, over the most awkward

patches of forest or rugged, craggy mountains almost defies belief. On a poor trail they are undoubtedly much faster than a good horse, and even under fairly good conditions they make, in the long run, better time than most ponies, because able to keep up their usual speed through spots which would arrest the progress of a heavy animal. I was once overtaken by a Déné who had covered on foot in one night a distance which had kept my horse on the move for the best part of two days.

Their fortitude in times of bodily discomfort is on a par with their powers of spasmodic activity. "I have," observes Hearne, "more than once seen the Northern Indians, at the end of three or four days fasting, as merry and jocose on the subject as if they had voluntarily imposed it on themselves"<sup>1</sup>. Hrdlicka remarks also of the Navahoes that they "can bear prolonged loss of sleep better than the average white, and the same rule applies to extremes in diet and exposure"<sup>2</sup>.

Richardson writes of the Dog-Ribs that few traces of the stoicism attributed to the red races exist among them. "They shrink from pain," he says, "show little daring, express their fears without disguise on all occasions, imaginary or real, shed tears readily"<sup>3</sup>. This may be true of the particular tribe mentioned, though I am strongly inclined to believe that such a conduct on their part was a consequence of their usual plan to attract the bounties of the whites. It is certainly not applicable to the nation as a whole. Hearne is much more correct when he writes that "they bear bodily pain with great fortitude"<sup>4</sup>. During upwards of a score of years passed in the midst of, or constant intercourse with, five distinct tribes, when I had also some opportunities of conversing with a few eastern Dénés, I have not seen any other man weeping for any cause than a Babine, who spent his time in the loud lamentations for the dead which have a sort of ritual character, and cannot be compared to crying under emotional impulse. The women, on the other hand, are ever ready with a copious supply of tears to shed almost at will.

### Pathological Conditions.

As to the pathological disorders most common amongst the Déné nation, they affect mostly the eyes, the lungs and the nerves, as well the delicate functions of the female organism. "It is rare to meet a man of fifty among [the Nahanaïs] with sound eyes", wrote a few years ago a trader<sup>5</sup> who has passed a number of years in the close vicinity of that tribe. This is an evident exaggeration; but it cannot be denied that snow, smoke and uncleanly habits have, in many cases, a most deleterious influence over the visual

<sup>1</sup> "A Journey from Prince of Wales Fort", p. 70.

<sup>2</sup> "Observations on the Navaho" (Amer. Anthropologist, p. 342).

<sup>3</sup> "Arctic Searching Expedition", vol. II, p. 13.

<sup>4</sup> *Ubi supra*, p. 345.

<sup>5</sup> J. C. Callbreath, in Report on the Yukon District, p. 196B.

organs. Various ophthalmic complaints are prevalent, of which the most common is a sort of sclerosis due to snow haze, which induces an inflammation of the eyes resulting in a more or less complete veiling of the cornea and a consequent loss of sight. Accidents while hunting through the thickets of coniferous saplings or other light wood have at times a similar effect.

Cases of strabism are not uncommon among the Carriers. We have seen that their frequency is responsible for the name of the northernmost Déné tribes. Persons born with a defective eye are also much more numerous than among the whites. Altogether, cases of complete blindness, induced or congenital, may be in the proportion of one to every 450 members of the more sedentary tribes, but less common among the strictly nomadic Dénés.

Instances of malformation, such as spinal defects or gibbousness, are also met with. But, with one exception, in all the cases which came to my notice, these were the results of accidents in childhood or of severe ailments in later years. Short-legged individuals seem to become unaccountably numerous in some Carrier villages. But I know of no congenital cases of other deformation, cretinism or idiotism in any tribe.

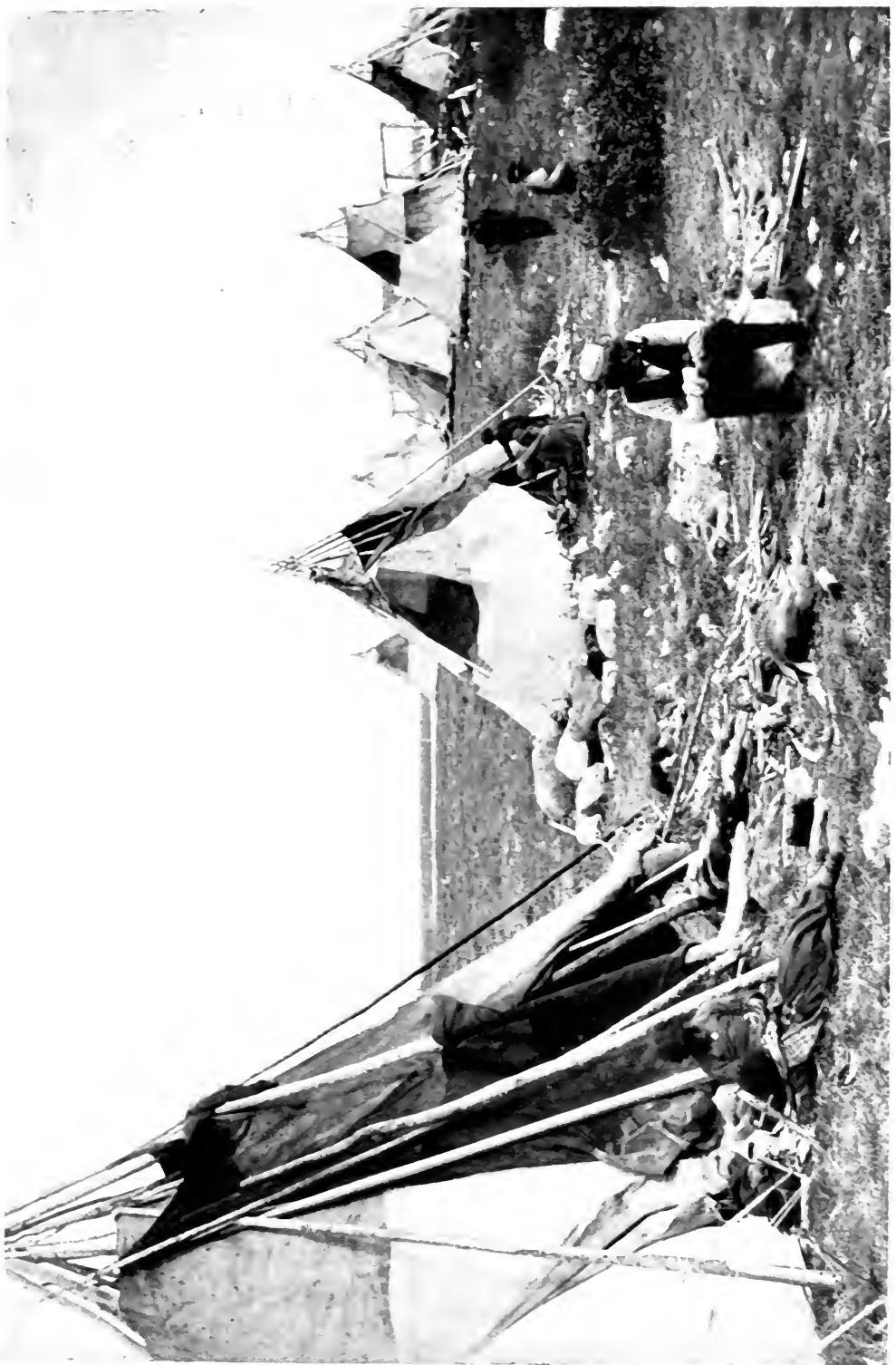
Pulmonary consumption has its victims in the north as elsewhere, and of the Mescalero Apaches their Agent wrote but lately that "tuberculosis has this little tribe in its grasp"<sup>1</sup>. Nevertheless, the Déné constitution seems to withstand its attacks much better than that of the whites, inasmuch as causes which, among the latter, would in course of time result in certain death are quite often without appreciable effects on the former. The same is true of rheumatism which, in spite of the almost daily occasions the natives have to contract it, is much less frequent among them than with us. Total paralysis of one or both legs is, however, prevalent to a limited extent among the Déné hunters.

The importation of farinaceous foods, strong drinks and consequent vices, not to speak of the more sedentary character of their lives unaccompanied by the hygienic precautions this should entail, militate against the general welfare of the tribes. Cases of vitiated blood, due to heredity or contagion, are also met with, but not to any alarming extent. Scrofulous diseases are practically unknown.

But the altered condition in the diet and occupations of the women, together with the imprudences which the drudgery of their lives almost makes a necessity, have induced in some tribes, such as the Carrier, too frequent cases of amenorrhea, flooding, or other ailments proper to their sex. Among the Chilcotins fainting fits and vomiting of blood due to catamenial causes were exceedingly common when I was stationed among them, twenty-five years ago. The same are to this day by no means rare occurrences among the other northern Dénés. I have never seen but one undoubted instance of epilepsy in the north.

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<sup>1</sup> Annual Report for 1904, p. 251.



Skin Lodges on Great Slave Lake.



### Longevity and Commiscegenation.

Besides the above the Dénés have diseases peculiar to themselves, which are induced by imagination, fear or superstition. I know of cases when otherwise healthy individuals died, because they were sure to have seen in their rambles through the woods a fabulous animal whose appearance is believed to portend evil, and of others who were convinced that they were the victims of the ill-will of persons supposed to be endowed with malefic powers. On the other hand, I am almost as certain that some would have died, who survived through the strong faith they had in my medical and other abilities.

The Dénés, especially those of the old stock, are generally long-lived. Hence nothing could be less accurate than Brinton's remark that in the north few live beyond fifty<sup>1</sup>. The truth is that they age incomparably more slowly than the whites, and a man of fifty is in the prime of life among them. I have known a Carrier who, from the events he remembered, must have been close on a hundred years old, and he died of an accident. Dr. Hrdlicka mentions<sup>2</sup> a Navaho who was "slightly over a hundred years". Nay, in their legends people of that tribe estimate at 102 years the age of an old man<sup>3</sup>. Taya, whose portrait was taken after a severe attack of influenza which changed considerably his personal appearance, was fully eighty at the time of his sickness, and, on recovering therefrom, he continued to be one of the best hunters of the Carrier tribe. Even at the present time, there are not a few Babines and Carriers with great-grandchildren.

Halfbreeds are scarce among the Dénés. Of course, their physique depends greatly on that of their parents. The offspring of a fair-complexioned white and of a Carrier is usually quite handsome, while the children of a dark-haired Canadian, for instance, will have almost the appearance of pure Indians. The accompanying illustration represents a full halfbreed (Duncan) with a quarteroon, the son of a halfbreed woman by a full-blooded Indian.

A mixture of blood, even with representatives of different but aboriginal races, almost in every case improves the stock. George Sadi az is a powerfully built man, half Carrier and half Tsimsian, while Charlie Murdock is also a pure Indian the son of an Algonquin father by a Sékanais mother. The anthropologist will not fail to remark the difference in the cast of their faces due in both cases to the physical characteristics of their maternal parents. The latter is married to a quarteroon Carrier; hence the more rounded and fuller facies of his children.

The Déné halfbreeds are, as a rule, an agreeable set of people, very religiously inclined, but weak in presence of temptation. They are notably more prolific than the full-blooded Indians, and their children seem more healthy in their infancy.

<sup>1</sup> "The American Race", p. 70.

<sup>2</sup> "Observations on the Navaho", p. 342.

<sup>3</sup> "The Early Navajo and Apache", by Fred. Hodge (*Amer. Anthropologist*, July 1895, p. 224).

## CHAPTER V.

**Personal Adornment and Deformation.****Care of the Hair.**

It is hardly possible that any absolutely uniform style of wearing the hair should have ever obtained among such widely spread tribes as are the Dénés. However, it can be broadly stated that, except the western Nahanaïs, all of them, male or female, wore it full length, unless mourning or a state of servitude forced them to have it short. In its normal condition, it was very generally tied in a knot behind the neck; but various additional fashions prevailed according to the different tribes.

In the north, the Loucheux mode of dressing the hair obtained among many. When first met by Mackenzie, the eastern portion of that group separated in two tufts that which grows on the temples or the forepart of the head. The hair of the crown or of the posterior part thereof was similarly treated, after which the four resulting queues were united on the back of the neck by means of a thin cord very neatly worked with artificially coloured hair. The women, and indeed some of the men as well, let their hair hang loose on their shoulders, whether it be long or short.

Further west in the same group, the process was less complicated, though marked by more richness, as richness went among those primitive peoples. According to Richardson, the hair was tied behind in a queue bound round at the root with a fillet of shells and beads, but left loose at the end. "This cue is daubed by the tribes on the Yukon with grease and the down of geese and ducks, until, by repetitions of the process continued from infancy, it swells to an enormous thickness; sometimes so that it nearly equals the neck in diameter, and the weight of the accumulated load of hair, dirt, and ornaments, causes the wearer to stoop forwards habitually. The tail feathers of the eagle and fishing-hawk are stuck into the hair on the back of the head, and are removed only when the owner retires to sleep, or when he wishes to wave them to and fro in a dance"<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> "Arctic Searching Expedition", vol. I, p. 381. Richardson adds: "Mr. Murray, when he went among these people, found that they attached nearly as much honour to the possession of these cues as the Chinese do to their pigtails".

The above is essentially the mode of dressing the hair noticed by Dall among the Tenan Loucheux of Alaska, as late as 1867. He writes in this connection: "Allowed to grow to its full length, and parted in the middle, each lock was smeared with a mixture of grease and red ochre. These then presented the appearance of compressed cylinders of red mud about the size of the finger. This enormous load, weighing in some of the adults at least fifteen pounds, is gathered in behind the head by a fillet of dentalium shells. A much smaller bunch hangs on each side of the face. The whole is then powdered with swan's down, cut up finely, so that it adheres to the hair, presenting a most remarkable appearance. The dressing of grease and ochre remains through life, more being added as the hair grows"<sup>1</sup>.

This style of wearing the hair is peculiar to the men. In the gaiety of their attire, such as we will soon describe it, the gorgeousness of their head-dress, and the glory of their painted face, these aborigines reminded F. Whymper, Dall's companion in Alaska, of the ideal North American Indian he had read of but never seen<sup>2</sup>.

Further west still, and close by the Eskimos of the extreme northwest, a few Loucheux shaved the crown of their head after the manner of their heterogeneous neighbours. Dr. F. Boas is also authority for the statement that the aboriginal inhabitants of Thalthan, or westermost Nahanaïs also shaved their heads<sup>3</sup>.

The above mentioned dentalium head-band was replaced in the east by a stripe of white hare skin, or of the belly part of a deer skin passing as a bandeau round the head, with the lank, black elf-locks streaming from underneat. The Dog-Rib men and women leave their hair without any other dressing than wiping their greasy hands on the matted locks, whenever they have been rubbing their bodies with marrow.

Among the ancient Carriers and most of the western Dénés, men and women parted their hair in the middle, the men letting it fall on their back tied together in a knot when in repose, and rolled up like that of the Chinese when travelling, while the women had it resting on the forepart of their shoulders in two plaited tresses adorned with dentalium shells.

To this day most Navahoes of either sex wear it long and gathered in a knot behind the neck, after what we might call the orthodox Déné fashion. This they occasionally treat to a regular shampooing with suds obtained from the yucca root. Among the San Carlos Apaches women trim it to the level of the shoulders. "The girls and younger women comb the front hair over the forehead and cut it in line with the eye-brows in the form of a 'bang', while the remainder is allowed to fall naturally at the sides and back"<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> "Travels on the Yukon", p. 108.

<sup>2</sup> "Travel and Adventure in the Territory of Alaska", p. 210.

<sup>3</sup> Tenth Ann. Rep. B. A. A. S., p. 40.

<sup>4</sup> "Notes on the San Carlos Apache", p. 489.

Old women simply brush or comb it backward. The hair of male Apaches is always trimmed and permitted to hang about, while some men of either the Navaho or Apache tribes use bandana handkerchiefs as head-bands. This is also done in the north, but only with a view to remedying headaches.

Among the Hupas, the hair was either tied in two clubs hanging about to the right and to the left, or in a single queue which fell behind in approved Déné style. A band of some kind was also often worn around the head. "A ring of stuffed buckskin about two inches thick, covered with the red scalps of woodpeckers, is still worn in some dances in which the regalia are not especially prescribed . . . Feathers or feathered darts are usually worn in the hair also"<sup>1</sup>. The Hupas of old seem to have been more fastidious than usual with primitive races, since, according to Dr. P. E. Goddard, they sometimes perfumed the hair with the *yerba buena* (*Micromeria chamissonis*) tied up therewith.

As to the Sarkees, the accompanying illustration will tell better than any words of mine of the alien influences which bear on their mode of wearing the hair. The main difference between that and the original Déné fashion consists mostly in the crown hair being bound up on the top, instead of on the back, of the head.

### As to Facial Hair.

In common with the natives of northeastern Asia, our aborigines are remarkable for the scarcity of their facial hair. In fact, were this point of their physique taken as a criterion of ethnological certitude, those branches of the human family should be stamped as very closely related. However, it would be going beyond the requirements of truth to affirm that no cases of really heavy beards occur even among the Dénés. The Nahanaïs old man whose portrait is presented to the reader is not more than half as hairy as three or four individuals whom I know within the single Carrier tribe.

In most cases it would seem that the natives thought nature had been so sparing with them in her distribution of that apanage of the male sex that what portion of it had fallen to their lot was not worth keeping. So, they very generally, though not invariably, plucked the few hairs that would grow on their chin, cheeks and upper lip.

This correcting of nature's handiwork is common to all the tribes, and to many non-Déné races as well. Facial depilation is reported of the African Zungoone by Gmelin; of the Sumatrans, by Marsden; of the Mindanas islanders, by Forrest; of the Pelly islanders, by Wilson; of the inhabitants of New Guinea, by Cartaret; of the natives of the Navigators' Islands, by Bougainville; of the Nootkans, by Captain Cook, and of most American aborigines by the first explorers; also of the Tuskis of Asia, by Lieut. Hooper.

<sup>1</sup> "Life and Culture of the Hupas", p. 19.

The last mentioned people use a knife for that operation<sup>1</sup>; but the western Dénés replace it by special tweezers such as those herewith, figured (fig. 1). The earliest and pre-European pattern of the same (fig. 2) consisted of two thin pieces of horn fashioned to the required shape by means of heating, and bound together with sinew threads. Those I have seen in use were of copper bartered from the Pacific Coast Indians. Instead of these the eastern Dénés originally had recourse to the edge of a blunt knife, over which their finger nails grasped the obnoxious hairs<sup>2</sup>, not unlike the Tuskis.

By the fire-side or in their moments of leisure — which were not few or far between — the old men kept themselves constantly busy feeling therewith the straggling hairs that would attempt to force an appearance on their smooth faces. These tweezers, when not in use, rested on the breast hanging from the neck.

The prehistoric Sékanais, if we may judge by the practice but lately prevalent among the old men of that tribe, indulged in the possession of a queer looking moustache, which consisted of the hair growing immediately below the septum, and of the same breadth therewith, while on both sides the lip was kept free of hair. The Navahoos

make use for that purpose of tin tweezers, with which they pluck all their beard except the moustache. Father Leopold tells us that the Sékanais hornless moustache just mentioned is also occasionally seen in the south<sup>3</sup>.

The same tweezers served also to trim the eye-brows to the most elegant shape possible, that is, narrow, long and very dark. To accentuate this hue, which is natural to all the tribes, what remained of the eye-brows after being remodelled by their manipulation was smeared over with charcoal mixed with grease. The Apaches went still further. Until a short time ago, they plucked out their eye-lashes, and even their eye-brows. A few still persist in the practice<sup>4</sup>.

### Tattooing.

Tattooing was formerly prevalent almost everywhere, and tattoo marks can to-day be seen practically in all the tribes — at least within British America. It is not a little strange that the wildest and most stubbornly averse to civilized ideas of all the Déné groups were originally the only ones which did not know of that practice. Tattooing is of a late date among the Apaches.

<sup>1</sup> "Ten Months among the Tents of the Tuski", pp. 36—37.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Hearne, *op. cit.*, p. 306.

<sup>3</sup> St. Anthony's Messenger, vol. XII, p. 7.

<sup>4</sup> "The Medicine-men of the Apache", by John G. Bourne, IX. Ann. Rep. Bur. of Ethnology, p. 475.

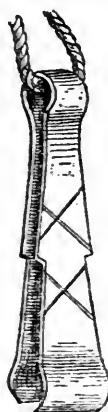


Fig. 1.



Fig. 2.

They now claim to have borrowed it from their Mohave neighbours, and only their young people are addicted to it. On the other hand, their near kinsmen, the Navahoës, do not seem to practise it even to this day, though their vocabulary contains a word for tattooing<sup>1</sup>.

In the north, the custom is more or less obsolescent. Even there it never quite obtained the social importance it enjoyed among the natives of the Pacific Coast living under corresponding latitudes, though the tribes nearest to them were naturally more affected by its manifestations than the purely aboriginal Dénés. Tattooing with the latter, nay, even among the Carriers or the Babines, never follows the elaborate patterns prevailing among the Maoris, or even the Haidas or the Tsimpsians. Blue bars, single, parallel or radiating from a common centre are, we might say, the primitive forms assumed by the tattoo marks. One, two or three short lines from the glabella over the forehead, perhaps as many from the corner of the eyes across the temples or simply horizontally drawn over the same, a like operation repeated from the angles of the mouth in the direction of the maxillary bones, and a few more running vertically over the chin are an exaggerated form of tattooing among the eastern Dénés. Cases were rare when all these parts of face were affected thereby in the same individual.

In this respect, the western Dénés were a sort of connecting link between the simple style of the eastern tribes and the more elaborate designs in vogue among the allophylic races of the North Pacific coast. Among the Carriers crosses or the symbols of mountains, birds or grizzly bears, such as figured in our chapter on Déné pictography, were not unfrequently reproduced on the skin in conjunction with the small stripes already mentioned. No totemic or other significance was attached to the signs as such when these consisted of mere bars. At times, however, persons closely related by blood or gentile ties were fond of following the same style of tattooing. Two women of the native village near Stuart Lake Mission have adopted the rather complex facial designs originated by the Kœzi of our illustration.

When the chest was adorned with tattoo marks, a circumstance of rare occurrence even among the western Dénés, the figures thereon represented had generally a totemic significance, as among the coast tribes from whom the whole system had been borrowed. A much coveted emblem among the Carriers was the symbol of the grizzly bear, the adoption of which cost many a ceremonial banquet and entitled the wearer to exceptional regard.

The wrists or forearms were more often the seat of tattoo marks. When there situated, these referred generally to a personal totemic animal, whose symbol on the limbs was supposed to still tighten the bonds already existing between totem and tattooed individual. Sometimes, however, marks on the arms or legs were intended as specifics against premature weakness. In such

<sup>1</sup> Strange to say, the Carriers, in spite of their long familiarity with the practice, use in connection with tattooing a word which means simply to sew.

cases they consisted merely of one or two transversal lines on the forearms or immediately above the ankles, which were tattooed on the young man by a pubescent girl.

Tattooing was performed, as among the other American races, by puncturing the skin with fine bone — or later steel — needles, and passing underneath a sinew thread coated with crushed charcoal or soot.

Nowadays Carrier youths of either sex oftentimes give to the tattoo marks on their wrists the form of their own name written in the syllabic characters invented for their benefit twenty-four years ago.

Tattooing was formerly more in vogue with the women than among the men. Yet Mackenzie relates that, among the first Slave and Dog-Rib Indians he met, the men had two double lines, either black or blue, tattooed upon each cheek from the ear to the nose<sup>1</sup>.

### Face Painting.

Generally the stronger sex prefers painting to tattooing. On all ceremonial occasions the Loucheux use both red and black paints, which they apply according to their personal fancy. Most commonly the eyes are encircled with black; a stripe of the same colour is then drawn down the middle of the nose from root to lower extremity, and a blotch is made on the upper part of each cheek. The forehead is also crossed by many narrow stripes running horizontally, and the chin is streaked alternately with red and black. According to Richardson, the same style of face painting originally obtained among the Chippewayans.

Among the Sékanais the prevailing fashion was for the women to draw below the eyes a black stripe across the face from ear to ear. But such was their lack of cleanliness that the exact character and outlines of this were soon obliterated by the accumulation of dirt.

Red clay, or ochre, and pulverized charcoal mixed with grease were the colouring matters employed by the northern Dénés. The author just referred to tells us that in his time, 1850, when the females painted their faces they used therefor a black pigment. Either colour was carried about the person in a small bag hanging from the neck. To-day vermilion, which they obtain from the fur traders, or, this failing, the colouring matter from any red cloth or paper is preferred and applied, as a rule, to the cheeks only.

In times of mourning etiquette demands that the females render their face as unattractive as possible, in order that people may know not only of their grief, but also of their resolve not to court men's attentions. This end is attained by smearing over one's face with pitch and grease, when dirt does not accumulate fast enough to suit one's "guardians", namely the relatives of the deceased.

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<sup>1</sup> "The Marvellous Country", p. 68.

If we are to believe S. W. Cozzens — the “if” is not unnecessary — Apaches in disgrace have a somewhat similar way of showing their affliction. That author relates having come upon a brave of that tribe lying dead, with one half of his face painted a bright vermillion, and the other half daubed with mud, a circumstance which he explains by supposing blame on the part of the warrior’s fellows for an offence of some sort<sup>1</sup>.

Among the western Dénés red was the festive colour, a token of good spirits or a desire to please; black forebode sinister designs, war or murder, and brown used sparingly and in an offensive manner told of mourning.

### Bodily Deformations and Mutilations.

Tattooing and painting have for their object the amelioration of nature’s handiwork in connection with one’s person. These attempts at improvement never take the shape of intentional skull deformation such as practised by

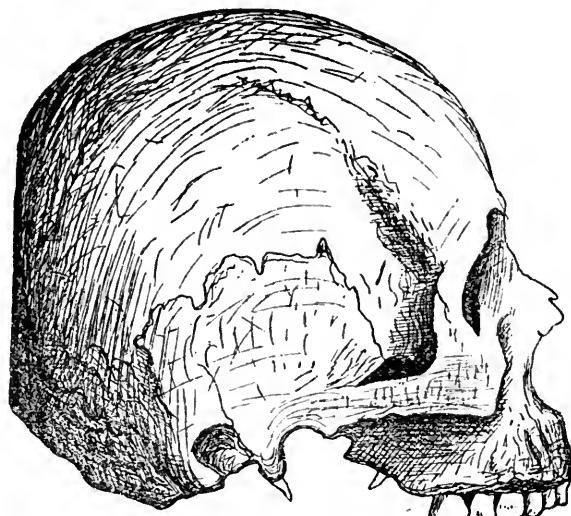


Fig. 3. Navaho Skull, flattened at Occiput.

other American aborigines. But, as we have already seen, occipital depression oftentimes results from the long contact of the infant’s head with the board on which it rests. Fig. 3, which is an exact copy of a photograph, very aptly illustrates the result of such contact.

The only intentional meddling with human anatomy with a view to improving the same which was ever practised by a Déné tribe occurred in the midst of the Loucheux. They bandaged the child’s feet to render them as small as possible. As a consequence short, unshapely feet are characteristic of the group to such an extent that Richardson, who records this custom,

<sup>1</sup> “The Marvellous Country” p. 68.

cannot help comparing it to that of the Chinese with regard to their infant daughters<sup>1</sup>.

Large eyes were as fashionable with the Carriers as small feet with the Loucheux. So the mothers did their best — with what results one can easily guess — to secure such for their babes by frequent manipulation on their eye sockets. An analogous treatment of the lower limbs was supposed to prevent them from becoming bow-legged.

It is rather unusual to class circumcision under the head of bodily mutilations, because wherever practised it partakes more of a ritual or religious character than of the nature of a surgical operation or the care of one's physique. In spite of Father Petitot's insistence on the subject, I long thought that I would never have to speak of it except to throw doubt on the correctness of his surmises in that connection, surmises or assertions which seemed to me prompted mostly by the requirements of a thesis which I cannot make mine. But here is a passage from Mackenzie's Voyages which forces me to reverse my opinion in this respect. The explorer refers to a group of twenty-five or thirty persons of the Slave and Dog-Rib tribes, whom he was the first white man to meet. "Whether circumcision was practised among them I cannot pretend to say", he writes; "but the appearance of it was general among those whom I saw"<sup>2</sup>. As he had excellent opportunities of ascertaining this particularity, this remark paves the way towards accepting Petitot's assertions on the same subject.

These are to the effect that the Loucheux and the Hares circumcised their male children a few days after birth with a flake of silex, after which the wound was healed by an application of pulverized pyrite mixed with grease. This information was imparted to him by an old Loucheux chieftainness and an old female shaman belonging to the Hare tribe<sup>3</sup>.

Those hyperborean people intended circumcision simply as a means of warding off two different kinds of cutaneous diseases in which the learned missionary recognized a great similarity with leprosy.

Another form of bodily deformation practised with a cutting tool seems to have been as exact a reproduction of a custom formerly in honour among ancient nations. I mean self-mutilation for the dead. This prevailed among the Assyrians and the Persians. Moses and other inspired writers inveigh against it, and, coming to a later date, we read that at the death of Attila his followers cut themselves with knives. Cutting off a finger-joint on the loss of a child or of a beloved husband was a frequent occurrence within

<sup>1</sup> "Arctic Searching Expedition", vol. I, p. 384.

<sup>2</sup> "Voyages from Montreal", vol. I, p. 235.

<sup>3</sup> *Monographie*, p. XXXVI. Fr. Petitot is slightly astray when he refers his reader to Mackenzie's text as corroborating his statement with regard to the Hare Indians. Mackenzie mentions only the Slaves and the Dog-Ribs. But this very oversight has this advantage that it makes us realize that the practice was common to four, instead of two, Déné tribes.

certain northern Déné tribes. I know, for instance, a Sékanais woman who to this day survives three self-inflicted mutilations, whereby she lost two finger-joints and one ear. Anger or despair occasionally resulted in similar amputations on oneself, as did jealousy on others. It was formerly quite customary with the eastern Dénés and the ancient Navahoes — if we are to judge from one of the latter's legends<sup>1</sup> — to cut off the nose of an unfaithful consort, so as to disfigure her for life and thereby diminish the chances of a new transgression.

To return to the question of personal adornment. We may now consider extraneous bodily ornaments, by contradistinction to such as partake more of the nature of dress or costume than of mere adjuncts conducive to the embellishment of the face or of the head.

### Every Day Head Ornaments.

Head ornaments were in vogue among all the tribes. Independently from such as might be proper to grand occasions or denote rank or transitory states of health, which do not come within the scope of this chapter, these had for their respective seats the ear, the nose, the lower lip and the hair.

Ear ornaments were of various kinds. Figs. 4 and 5 represent pendants which I have seen in actual use among the Carriers. The former is of haliotis, and was attached to the lobe of the ear by means of a buckskin cord. In the case of fig. 5 the part of the organ most affected was the helix, which was made to support three or four strings of the same material as in the preceding case. These passed through dentalium shells alternating with glass or bone beads in the middle, and small beaver

claws at the bottom. This ornament was proper to the men, while the haliotis pendant was hardly ever seen elsewhere than amongst the women. The same pendant as fig. 5, but with some unimportant modifications in pattern or material, was also worn by the Loucheux men. The Dénés of Portland Inlet,



Fig. 4.

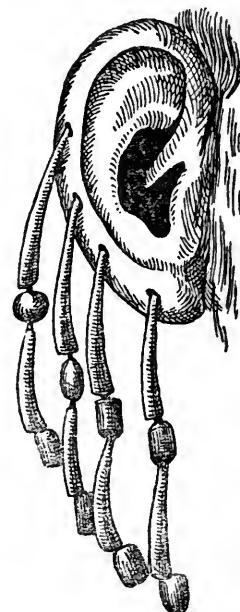


Fig. 5.

<sup>1</sup> "Navaho Legends", p. 143.

on the Northern Pacific, replace them by ornaments made of the wool of the mountain goat hanging from the lobe and the helix.

Glass beads were, of course, due to commerce with the white traders, Russian, English or Canadian. Originally these were mostly of bone, of wood or of copper, though the stone of a particular berry occasionally served the same purpose.

These beads are now of hollow silver and entirely home made among the Navahoes, as are also the ear-rings of the men. Their married women have also the ears pierced for similar ornaments, but they do not wear any. According to A. M. Stephen, their unfaithfulness to their husbands being notorious, they used to be punished by having their ear pendants torn through the lobes. Hence when a girl is married among them, she now takes these out of her ears, and wears them hanging from her necklace<sup>1</sup>.

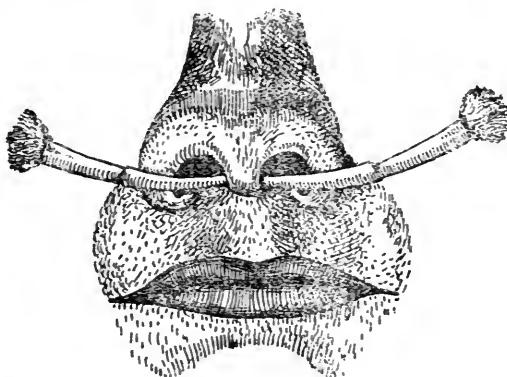


Fig. 6.

Among the Hupas the ear ornaments took the shape of dentalium shells adorned with tassels of woodpecker feathers for the men, and of round disks or oblong pieces of abalone shells hanging by means of twine, for the women<sup>2</sup>.

The southern Déné tribes do not appear to have known of the nose-ornament, which was so highly thought of in the north. Among the western tribes this consisted very generally of two, three, or sometimes four dentalium shells passing through the septum as indicated in fig. 6. The little tufts at either end were made of the red down of the woodpecker (*Ceophleus pileatus*). The extremities of the shells were sometimes in inverted positions. At times also the Carriers adopted a still different style of nose ornament. They ran a sort of wooden pin through the nasal partition, and fixed at both ends a dentalium shell about an inch and a half long. In the east, away from the

<sup>1</sup> "The Navajo", Amer. Anthropologist, Oct. 1893, p. 356.

<sup>2</sup> "Life and Culture of the Hupa", p. 20.

source of supply of these precious shells, that is the Pacific Ocean, the natives contented themselves with a bare wooden peg or a goose quill placed in a similar position.

Repulsive as these would-be ornaments seem to us, it is a well known fact that they really appeal to the primitive mind. We see them in use among several uncivilized divisions of mankind as, for instance, the aboriginal Australians and many others. At times these were exchanged among the western Dénés with haliotis crescents (fig. 7) inserted in the septum with the cusps pendant. Rings of the same material, of copper, of horn, or later or silver were also worn as among the ancient Peruvians and some African tribes. Cruciform nose-pendants, such as herewith represented (fig. 8), were also fairly common. They were held in position by pressing the forepart of the septum through the cusps until the hole therein was reached.

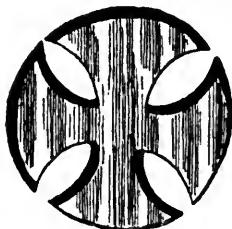


Fig. 8.

Both crescentic and circular nose-pendants survived in the north the elongated ornament previously mentioned. Indeed from one of Thomas Simpson's remark, a person would infer that the latter enjoyed but an ephemeral vogue there. He says that "this foolish fancy originated in [the Loucheux] having seen some of these shells with one of the half-breed women"<sup>1</sup>.



Fig. 7.

### Non-Ceremonial Body Ornaments.

To these face ornaments one of the northern tribes, the Babine, still added the labret, which is so well known to the sociologists familiar with the North Pacific aboriginal races. In the words of W. H. Dall, this is in northwest America "a plug, stud, or variously shaped button, made from various materials, which is inserted at or about the age of puberty through a hole or holes pierced in the thinner portions of the face about the mouth. Usually after the first operation has been performed, and the original slender pin inserted, the latter is replaced from time to time by a larger one, and the perforation thus mechanically stretched and in the course of time permanently enlarged"<sup>2</sup>.

As regards the nature, mode and time of insertion, these words are every way applicable to the labrets of the Babines. Only, these were invariably restricted to the lower lip; none were ever worn on either side of the mouth as among the Eskimos. When they had reached the maximum size which

<sup>1</sup> "Narrative of the Discoveries and the North Coast of America", p. 190.

<sup>2</sup> "Masks and Labrets", Third Ann. Rep. Bur. of Ethnol., pp. 77—78.

was to be retained for life, they were tailless studs oval in circumference, at least noe and a quarter inch long, of some hard wood, commonly mountain maple (*Acer glabrum*). They had for effect to considerably distend the lower lip, giving it a shocking prominence which recalled that of the larger mammals, such as the moose, which was called *babine* by the French Canadians in the employ of the first trading companies established in the north. Hence the name of the tribe.

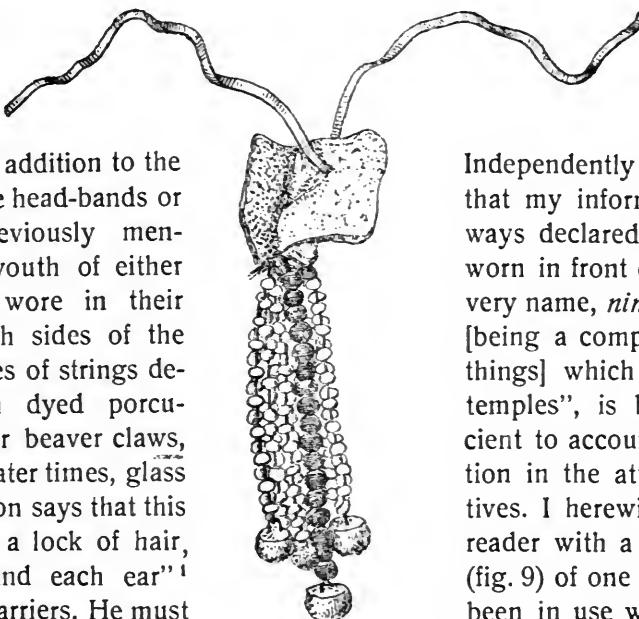


Fig. 9.

Finally, in addition to the above and the head-bands or bandeaus previously mentioned, the youth of either sex usually wore in their hair, on both sides of the head, bunches of strings decorated with dyed porcupine quills or beaver claws, or again, in later times, glass beads. Harmon says that this was "tied to a lock of hair, directly behind each ear"<sup>1</sup> among the Carriers. He must be mistaken as regards the usual seat of that ornament.

coloured beads suspended to a piece of buckskin and ending in each case with a prosaic boot button.

This recalls the string of buckskin terminating at both ends in shell pendants, which, among the Hupas, was passed back of the neck and bound up with the hair by means of strips of mink skin, which were sometimes covered with woodpecker crests wound spirally around the hair tresses or clubs.

Bracelets were for the wrists and arms what the various ornaments just reviewed were for the face. They were originally of wood, sinews, cariboo horn or bone in the north, but among the Yellow-Knives and their neighbours copper soon supplanted the more primitive and less durable material. The Carriers, Babines and other western Dénés also took to beating into the

Independently from the fact that my informants have always declared that this was worn in front of the ears, its very name, *nimpa-stla*, "that [being a compound of many things] which lies over the temples", is by itself sufficient to account for its position in the attire of the natives. I herewith present the reader with a representation (fig. 9) of one which had just been in use when it passed into my hands. It is made of strings of variously co-

<sup>1</sup> "An Account of the Indians living West of the Rocky Mountains", p. 246.

proper shape for the same purpose the copper bars they derived from the sea coast. Later on, pewter and silver, which first came to them under the shape of spoons, and American coins introduced by the traders, were also put to the same uses. The Navahoes act likewise with regard to the cheap Mexican dollar pieces and some of their bracelets are quite heavy and much broader than those of the north. They are also worn by men and women among them, while the northern tribes restrict their use to the fair sex.

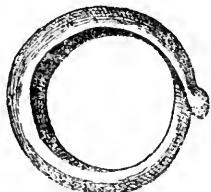


Fig. 10.

The regular bracelets are called *nathan*, or "that [being heavy] which lies around", by the Carriers. A different kind is made of glass beads sewed with sinew thread according to such patterns as suit the fancy of the wearer. These wristlets are further adorned with ribbons, pearl buttons, etc., and are proper to youths, who call them *lla-tcæn*, "hand-stick (or handle)".

The primitive Dénés were not acquainted with finger-rings. But as soon as they became aware of the existence of such ornaments among the white traders, they set upon fabricating some, generally after the pattern illustrated by fig. 10, when they lacked the means of buying those of brass or copper offered by the strangers. The material, when home made, was again cariboo horn. To-day even the Carriers, who prefer buying to manufacturing, occasionally hammer silver coins into good sized finger-rings, as do also very generally the Navahoes.

Practically all the Dénés, especially the women, have their fingers loaded with three or four rings. Only the poorer individuals content themselves with one or two. Anklets, as worn by the natives of Africa, were never known among our people.

## CHAPTER VI.

**Dress and Personal Habits.**

The scope of this chapter shall be restricted to the dress prevalent among the Dénés under any but ceremonial circumstances, and used by people of all ranks and conditions of life. This proviso shall therefore exclude dance or festival costumes, those proper to chiefs and other categories of men or women, as well as those which denote transitory states, such as mourning, menstruating, etc. All of these shall be fully described when we treat of the dignities or circumstances that call for the same.

**Dress of the Southern Dénés.**

It is more than probable that the personal attire of the southern tribes was originally of an extremely scanty character. Their own traditions represent the Navahoes as very poorly clad previous to the introduction of domestic sheep among them. Before they came to possess horses they rarely succeeded in killing deer or mountain sheep. Whenever a man secured any of these animals, he made a garment of their skins by tying the forelegs together over his shoulders. This is according to a tradition which tallies wonderfully well with a statement I find in an old author, Woodes Rogers, who says of the natives of Mexico<sup>1</sup> in 1710: "Dans la partie qu'on nomme le Nouveau Mexique, on trouve encore quelques uns des naturels qui sont très barbares et fort adonnés aux armes: les hommes ne portent que des peaux, et les femmes n'ont à peine autre chose pour se couvrir que leurs cheveux"<sup>2</sup>.

The Navaho legends do not represent their women as quite so lightly attired. They claim that they wore "a garment consisting of two webs of woven cedar bark, one hanging in front and one behind"<sup>3</sup>; but in warm weather these may have been discarded. This was certainly the case with their kin, the Apaches, since, almost fifty years later (1758), Miguel Venegas wrote of them: "They go entirely naked, but make their incursions on horses of great swiftness which they have stolen from other parts. A skin serves

<sup>1</sup> The reader will not fail to remember that practically the whole area of that Territory was then occupied by the Dénés.

<sup>2</sup> *Abrégé Chronologique ou Histoire des Découvertes des Européens*, vol. X, p. 289. Paris, 1766.

<sup>3</sup> "Navaho Legends", p. 141.

them as a saddle. Of the same skins they make little boots or shoes of one piece"<sup>1</sup>.

Mocassins composed therefore the whole costume of the Apaches by the middle of the eighteenth century. About a hundred years thereafter, that is, shortly before they were supposed to come under the control of the United States, it had not become much more complicated, since we read that when at home they went about naked, except for the breech-piece and mocassins, while the women had dirty old blankets tied around their waists, and the upper part of the body free from any covering<sup>2</sup>. The accompanying illustration tells of a most satisfactory change due to Government influences among the Jicarilla Apaches, the section of the tribe which has shown itself the most amenable to civilized ideas.

To complete the costume of the prehistoric Navahoes, they "all wore sandals of yucca fibre or cedar bark. They had headdresses made of weasel-skins and rat-skins, with the tails hanging down behind. These headdresses were often ornamented with colored artificial horns, made out of wood, or with the horns of the female mountain sheep shaved thin. Their blankets were made of cedar bark, of yucca fibre, or of skins sewed together"<sup>3</sup>.

In addition to a breech-clout of deer skin or of several skins joined together, the costume of the Hupas consisted mostly of a robe made of two deer skins with the hair on, which were simply joined along one side and whose necks met over the left shoulder. This was girdled at the waist, and the tails of each skin nearly or quite reached the ground. They also wore leggings composed of a single piece of buckskin with the seam in front, which was concealed by means of a fringe. The top reached to the knees and was turned down, dropping around the leg the component parts of another fringe, while horizontal figures painted on the leggings added to the elegance thereof.

As to the women, they were dressed in a skirt of tanned buckskin and an apron. The latter was worn under the skirt and consisted of many long strands attached to a belt. These strands were made of pine nut shells of *Pinus attenuata* strung on twine, over which leaves of *Xerophyllum tenax* braided. The skirt hanged from the waist to the knees, and its lower edge was adorned with a thick fringe about sixteen inches long, while the top of the garment was folded over and slit into a fringe perhaps six inches long.

In cold or wet weather a blanket made of the skin of a deer, wild cat or other animal was worn over the shoulders, with the hair next to the body, except when it was raining<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> "History of California", quoted by M. A. Bell in "New Tracks in North America", vol. I, p. 233.

<sup>2</sup> "The Marvellous Country", p. 110.

<sup>3</sup> "Navaho Legends", p. 141.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Goddard's "Life and Culture of the Hupa", *passim*.

### The Loucheux costume.

In the north, lightness of attire was hardly compatible with the prevailing climatic conditions. While in the east the dress was hardly uniform enough to permit of a short description and was characterized chiefly by dinginess and poverty of material, the more manly and industrious Loucheux were vested in the glory of a costume which was certainly not devoid of elegance. The most noticeable point of it consisted in the peaked frock or outer garment worn by men and women.

This particularity was, according to Bishop Taché<sup>1</sup>, proper to the original garb of all the northern Déné tribes, and practically all ethnologists have since followed his opinion and made his statement theirs. But Richardson evidently differs therefrom when he writes that "the Kutchin also wear these pointed skirts, but they have not been *adopted* [italics mine] by the Hare Indians or any of the Chepewyan tribes who, in common with the more southern Indians, cut their shirts or frocks evenly round at the top of the thigh<sup>2</sup>". He then judiciously remarks that the long pointed garments of the Loucheux probably gave origin to the accounts of men with a tail, who were thought by the North Pacific coast aborigines to inhabit the interior of Alaska and what is now the Yukon Territory. The reports were reliable enough, but understood in too literal a sense.

The Eskimos wear similarly shaped frocks, and when the student is familiar with the Dénés' main characteristics, which is a wonderful receptiveness and power of imitation, very little doubt will remain in his mind that either the Loucheux copied in this respect the costume of the Eskimos — which to me seems the more probable hypothesis — or the immense majority of the northern Dénés discarded it in favour of the simpler dress of their southern neighbours of Algonquin parentage.

The annexed plate, which is reproduced from Richardson's "Arctic Searching Expedition", will explain better than words the nature of the Loucheux national costume. The upper or coat like garment was made with the skins of cariboo fawns dressed with the hair on. Its peculiar peaked appendages were double, one before the other behind, in the dress of the men, but that of the women was cut even in front, though it had behind a tapering tail-like point even longer than in that of the men.

On the lower Mackenzie these flaps do not seem to have been quite so sharply peaked. Thomas Simpson says<sup>3</sup> that there they almost reached the ground and were shaped like beaver tails. This is the exact pattern obtaining among the Eskimos of the Mackenzie delta, who were closer neighbours to the Loucheux seen by Simpson than those whose costume

<sup>1</sup> *Esquisse sur le Nord-Ouest de l'Amérique*, 2nd edition, p. 102.

<sup>2</sup> "Arctic Searching Expedition", vol. I, p. 357.

<sup>3</sup> "Narrative of the Discoveries on the North Coast of America", p. 103.

Richardson's friend, A. H. Murray<sup>1</sup>, depicted were to the Eskimos of the north or of the west. The greater similarity in the wearing apparel of the two peoples who had more intercourse with one another might be viewed in the light of a confirmation of my contention that it was the Loucheux who, in this particular as in so many others, were the real borrowers. These double-tailed coats were in general use all along the Yukon, for perhaps a thousand miles of its course, as far as the Coyukuns inclusively.

A broad band of beads was worn across the shoulders and breast of the shirt or coat, and the hinder part of the same was fringed with fancy beads and small leathern tassels wound round with dyed porcupine quills and strung with the silvery fruit of the oleaster (*Elaeagnus argentea*). This was the style most in vogue, but the reader will readily understand that the ornamentation of the coat varied somewhat according to individual tastes and social conditions.

The second or lower part of the costume was common to both sexes, and consisted of a pair of buckskin breeches with the footgear of the same piece and material or sewed thereto. "A stripe of beads, two inches broad, strung in alternate red and white squares, runs from the ankle to the hip along the seam of the trowsers, and bands of beads encircle the ankles. The poorer sort wear only a fringe of beads and sometimes only porcupine quills<sup>2</sup>". In winter, shirts of hare skin were worn, and the deer skin pantaloons had the fur next to the body. Richardson adds that in his time travellers carried with them their dress clothes, which they put on every evening after encamping, and when they came to the trading posts. No other Déné group or single tribe in the north paid so much attention to personal cleanliness and neatness of appearance.

### Among the Northeastern Dénés.

As we leave the Loucheux group, the costume undergoes a radical change. Both double-tailed coat and breeches disappear, to make place for overshirts cut evenly below and long leggings with mocassins generally separate.

The material of the entire wearing apparel remains cariboo or moose skin, tanned to a beautiful finish. The shirt reaches to the middle of the thighs, and the ends of a piece of cloth, secured to a waistband, hang down before and behind. While at home, that is, when not actually travelling or out of camp, a sort of mantle of fur skins, replaced later by a smoky, greasy blanket of English manufacture, was worn over the shoulders by day, and formed at night the only bed covering of the Déné.

During the winter, skins of young cariboo with the hair on were substituted for the above mentioned leather. The shirt-like garment of the Hare

<sup>1</sup> The father of my own friend, A. C. Murray, the present commander of Fort St. James on Stuart Lake, British Columbia.

<sup>2</sup> "Arctic Searching Expedition", vol. I, pp. 380—81.

Indians was then made of strips of white hair skins, twisted and woven according to the process described in our chapter on Industries. I know of no material that for warmth can compare with that used by the Hare Indians.

The women's dress resembled the men's, except that the summer shirt was somewhat longer and generally accompanied by a petticoat reaching almost to the knees.

As to the leggings, they were of the same material as the upper garment, and descended from the top of the thigh to the ankle, where they met a pair of mocassins of the same soft leather, with tops overlapping around the ankle, to which they were tied by means of buckskin strings. Among the Hares, however, the breeches with footgear attached thereto which were general in the Loucheux tribe were more commonly worn by individuals of both sexes<sup>1</sup>. If we are to believe Dr. Boas' informants, the Dénés of Portland Inlet, males and females, also wore skin pants, but with separate mocassins. Everywhere else leggings very generally prevailed. Even where the original leather costume has yielded to dresses made of imported textile fabrics, the leggings have uniformly been retained in the north. To this day the men wear them over their trousers and the women next to the skin. They are now made of some woollen stuff.

The above mentioned articles of wearing apparel were more or less neatly decorated, according to the fancy or skill of one's wife, sister or mother, as well as the state of one's personal means, with beadwork or an embroidery of porcupine quills coloured red, black, yellow and white, the connecting material being moose hair of leather thongs spirally arranged. The seams and hems were the usual seats of these ornaments.

### Dress of the Western Dénés.

As we come west we find a further alteration in the dress of the Dénés, which is now affected by the proximity of the Pacific coast tribes. The leggings are still everywhere in evidence, at least in the winter time, but the upper part of the costume is very often replaced by an ampler sort of robe or blanket worn mantle-wise, as the counterpart of the chief piece of wearing apparel used on the coast. The shirt-like garment is, as in the east, of soft leather reaching generally to the thighs; but, among the Dénés of Portland Inlet, this was in winter made of marmot skins with mittens attached. During the fair season this sort of jacket was often discarded.

The outer garment or blanket was made of skins of beaver, lynx, ground-hog, or even musk-rat. Coverings of woven hare skin strips were also common. These were tied over the shoulders and fastened round the waist by means of a belt of green skin. When of marmot skins, the robe was decorated on the fur side with the tails of the animal, and worn with the hair out, except

<sup>1</sup> *Monographie des Dène-Dindjié*, by Fr. Petitot, p. XXIV.

in cold weather. The usual supply of fringes, tassels, and coloured ornaments served to conceal the seams in the garment.

In addition to this robe of furs — which occasionally took the shape of a blanket of dressed moose skin — the women wore an apron twelve or eighteen inches broad, reaching almost to the knees and made of a piece of deer skin or, among the poorer Carriers, of several salmon skins. This last material, though used quite extensively by the latter in the preparation of leggings, mocassins and bags, was not appreciated when it was a question of aprons worn over the bare flesh, as its roughness and lack of suppleness rendered it far from pleasant to the wearer.

During the cold season both sexes, but more especially the women on account of the outdoor work to which they were subjected, added to the foregoing a sort of small blanket of undressed skin of any fur-bearing animal, which covered their breast from the neck to the waist. This pectoral blanket was kept in position by means of strings passing behind the neck and also secured by the outer girdle round the waist. In olden times a swan's skin served an identical purpose.

When I first ministered to the spiritual wants of the Chilcotins, robes of marmot or hare skins were still fairly common among a part of the tribe. But, when of marmot skin, the robe was worn with the hair next to the body, and its folds were gathered round the middle by means of a belt from which hung beaver nails or teeth, old thimbles, beads or shells of brass cartridges, which produced while walking a jingling sound dear to the native ear.

Among the Tscet'saut, or Dénés of Portland Canal, this robe is reported to have been of bird skins in prehistoric times. The women of that band also wore a short coat and jacket, both of which were of mountain goat skins<sup>1</sup>.

The leggings of the western Dénés were always of dressed skin, generally of moose or cariboo. They covered the legs in their whole length, and were held in position by a string connected either with the outer belt or with the girdle which retained the breech-piece. They were furthermore secured below the knee by means of ornamental garters which, in later times, consisted of cords plaited out of variously coloured yarn, with several pendent tassels or woollen tufts at each extremity. These were originally worked with porcupine quills by the young women, who would then present them to their favourites of the sterner sex, so that the standing of a young Carrier hunter among the unmarried females was determined by the number of garters he wore.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Tenth Report of the North-Western Tribes of Canada, p. 39. The ethnologist will not fail to notice in the garments said to have been worn by the ancient Carriers and Tscet'saut a significant similarity with the cloaks of the same material which the Russians found in general use among the natives of the Aleutian Islands, when they discovered the same. Cf. "Account of the Russian Discoveries" by W. Coxe, *passim*. London, 1787.

### Minor Details of the Wearing Apparel.

The garters, as well as the cinctures which they occasionally wore, were among the eastern Dénés embroidered with special skill and neatness with porcupine quills and sinews. They were further adorned with fringes of leather worked round with hair of various colours.

Over the breast practically all the tribes wore necklaces of material varying according to the resources of their habitats. In the northwest, the fine elongated shell, *Dentalium Indianorum*, to which we have repeatedly referred, was in great demand for that purpose, and the quantity of it displayed on the wearing apparel afforded a safe gauge to the wealth of the individual. The dentalium necklace affected different forms according to the personal fancy, but it consisted generally of several rows of shells threaded with sinews and reclining gracefully over the breast.

Beads replaced these in the east, and silver is to this day used in the same connection in the far south. The Navahoes usually fashion this metal into large heavy disks or oval plates, wherewith they decorate their belts and other parts of their costume. Strings of turquoise, coral or globular silver beads of their own manufacture are also much in evidence on their persons<sup>1</sup>.

The prehistoric Carriers had a more primitive kind of necklace, which they called *tti-nełthan*, "that [being heavy and cylindrical] which lies around and below the head". It was obtained by boiling and splitting off a thin band of a cariboo horn, which was given when still pliable the desired form. As an attempt at ornamentation, geometrical designs were scratched with the stone knife, over which a pinch of diluted red ochre was rubbed with the hand. The colouring matter passed over the smooth surface of the horn, but remained in the light furrowings which were thus brought into greater prominence. This primitive method of ornamentation is still in vogue among the western Dénés. Charcoal is sometimes used instead of vermillion.

Persons claiming shamanistic powers very commonly replaced this by a necklace of grizzly bear claws, beaver teeth, etc.

It now remains with us to describe two pieces of the personal attire which, essential though they may seem to the European mind, were looked upon as scarcely more important than the necklace. I mean the head dress and the footgear. Both were quite often dispensed with. The former, especially, was hardly known at all among the females. Yet Mackenzie mentions as being worn by the eastern Dénés a kind of band encircling the head and "composed of strips of leather one inch and a half broad, embroidered with porcupine quills and stuck round with the claws of bears or wild fowl inverted, to which are suspended a few short thongs of the skin of an animal that resembles the ermine, in the form of a tassel"<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> See most illustrations representing Navahoes in this work.

<sup>2</sup> "Voyages from Montreal", vol. I, p. 236.

The Carriers formerly wore a dainty cap of marmot skin made in this wise. "A band some three inches broad was cut from the skin with the hair on and secured at either end so as to form a crown-like head dress. Over this was sewed a piece of similar material leaving out a brim of the same width as that of the band. The projecting part of the skin was then slit into a fringe which rested gracefully on the original head-band. This description applies to the summer cap. The winter head gear consisted of a hemispherical bowl of woven rabbit-skin strips without fringes. Both summer and winter, men and women wore the same kind of cap"<sup>1</sup>.

As to the national foot gear, this ever was, and has remained to this day, the well-known mocassin, or soft leather shoe. In the north, it was originally of the dressed skin of the elk (*Cervus canadensis*). But the poorer classes frequently made it of untanned marmot skin, or in the west even of salmon skin. Mocassins are now uniformly of dressed cariboo or moose skin in the far north and of deer skin among the Chilcotins.

Their manufacture necessitates no great expenditure of skilled labour. An oblong piece of soft leather is trimmed to a semi-oval shape by rounding off one end, which is then curved up lengthwise and the outer edges sewed together with sinew thread, thus forming the forepart of the foot. An instep piece, generally of different colour and material — though always of leather — and usually ornamented with beadwork or silk embroidery is then inserted in front, and the hind part joined together. To the upper edge of the resulting shoe a piece of skin of an inferior quality, or not unfrequently some canvas or cotton stuff, is then added, which is intended to take in the lower end of the pants or leggings, round which two leather thongs are laced to keep the footgear in position. As a further ornament a narrow band of red or blue cloth, or both combined, with notched or scalloped edges run horizontally round the ankle from one side of the instep to the other.

The Chilcotins, who have of late become the possessors of large bands of horses, ordinarily insert one or two pieces of hard wood in the heel part of their mocassins, which they use as spurs.

According to Dr. Boas, instead of mocassins the Tsœtsaut of both sexes wore high boots of marmot skins which reached to the thigh. The Navahoës, on the other hand, prefer low mocassins of buckskin, soled with rawhide and surmounted with leggings of dyed deer skin. When the Hupas wore any footgear, at all, the sole of their mocassins was double. But in the south, and indeed in the north as well, it is quite common to go barefooted. In rainy weather, or even through the slush resulting in winter from momentary warm winds, no footgear of any kind is worn in the north, as the softness of the mocassin would then cause it to adhere uncomfortably to the wet feet.

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<sup>1</sup> "Notes on the Western Dénés", p. 164.

Whenever travelling, the first thing the northern Déné will do after starting his bivouac fire will be to divest himself of his mocassins which, if wet, he will wring thoroughly and set to dry, along with his *khé-thael*, a square piece of some woollen stuff wherewith he wraps his feet previous to putting on his footgear.

Mittens are for the hands what mocassins are for the feet. In a cold country, such as the hyperborean steppes over which the Déné roams, the usefulness, nay, the necessity, of such adjuncts to the costume cannot be questioned. In fact, our people have become so accustomed to wear them that, even during the fair season, they will hardly do any kind of manual labour without having them on. They are suspended to a cord of plaited

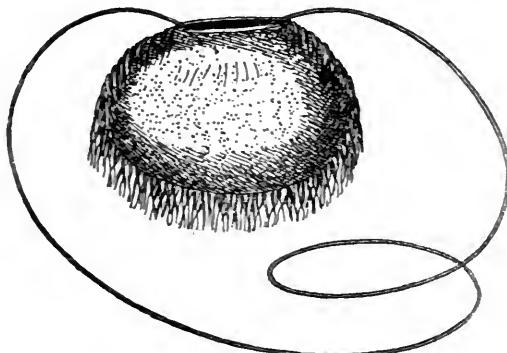


Fig. 11. *Khwœen-zœes* (Fire-bag).

yarn passing behind the neck and over the shoulders, so that when not in actual use there is little risk of losing them. With the same end in view, a few tribes have them sewed to their upper garment. The wrist-band is invariably ornamented with stripes of blue and red cloth, together with coloured ribbons, according to the means of the wearer.

Gloves are occasionally used, but they were not known in prehistoric times. The Carriers call them *la-pat*, or mittens for the fingers. With others they are *neto-pat*, that is, mittens of the whites.

As the Déné costume was not provided with any pockets, any small article of which the Indian might at any moment have stood in need had to be carried about the person hanging from the neck, except the large knife which was often suspended from the belt. In addition to an awl and, in the case of adult men, of a pair of hair-tweezers, a fire-bag or *khwœen-zœs*, was formerly thus carried about when travelling. Its *raison d'être* ceased with the introduction of matches, and its name is now given to a small pouch of different pattern, though somewhat similar in intent. The former served to keep in the tinders and parched hay originally required to start a fire with the drill or more recently with the fire-steel. Its elliptical form (fig. 11) was probably designed to help guarding its contents against rain or moisture. As

an additional measure of precaution, the pouch was generally carried under the armpit, though suspended from the neck.

Its modern substitute plays among the present generation of young people the same social rôle as Harmon ascribes to the garters of the old time Carriers, in that sense that its richness of material or ornamentation denotes the esteem with which the possessor of the same is regarded by the members of the fair sex, whether they be his wife or a maid aspiring to that rank. It is made in the form of a flour sack, with two running-strings whose ends are converted into one or more tassels, which the savage dandy displays from the pocket, as in the case of left hand figure in accompanying illustration. Matches and tobacco, with a pocket knife, are generally the only things kept in the modern *khwæn-zæs*<sup>1</sup>.

### Moral sense as evidenced by the Costume.

The natives of the North Pacific coast used to go almost naked, their only covering being a sort of cloak for the men, who quite often dispensed with it entirely. The sense of shame was more developed in the Dénés of the pure unadulterated stock, without, however, attaining (except in pubescent girls) that stage of refinement which we call modesty. It was noticeable that this feeling lost much of its keenness with tribes of mixed origin, such as the Babines, the Carriers, etc. According to Harmon, who lived among the latter at a time when they had not as yet imbibed the ideas of propriety which are the result of Christian civilization, the Carrier men often went naked in summer time "without anything to cover even that part of the body which civilized, and the most also of savage, people think it necessary to conceal"<sup>2</sup>. He adds: "Indeed they manifest as little sense of shame in regard to this subject as the brute creation".

Even among the Sékanais met by Mackenzie, no breech-clout or other analogous covering was worn by the men<sup>3</sup>.

In course of time and by dint of associating with the white traders, the male Carriers gradually adopted a breech-cloth to cover their nakedness; but, as evidence that fashion and probably the words of reproof from the strangers had more to do with this addition to the original wearing apparel than a sense of delicacy, Harmon remarks that "you will see it [the breech-cloth] one day at its proper place, the next probably about their heads, and the third about their necks, and so on, repeatedly shifted from one place to another"<sup>4</sup>.

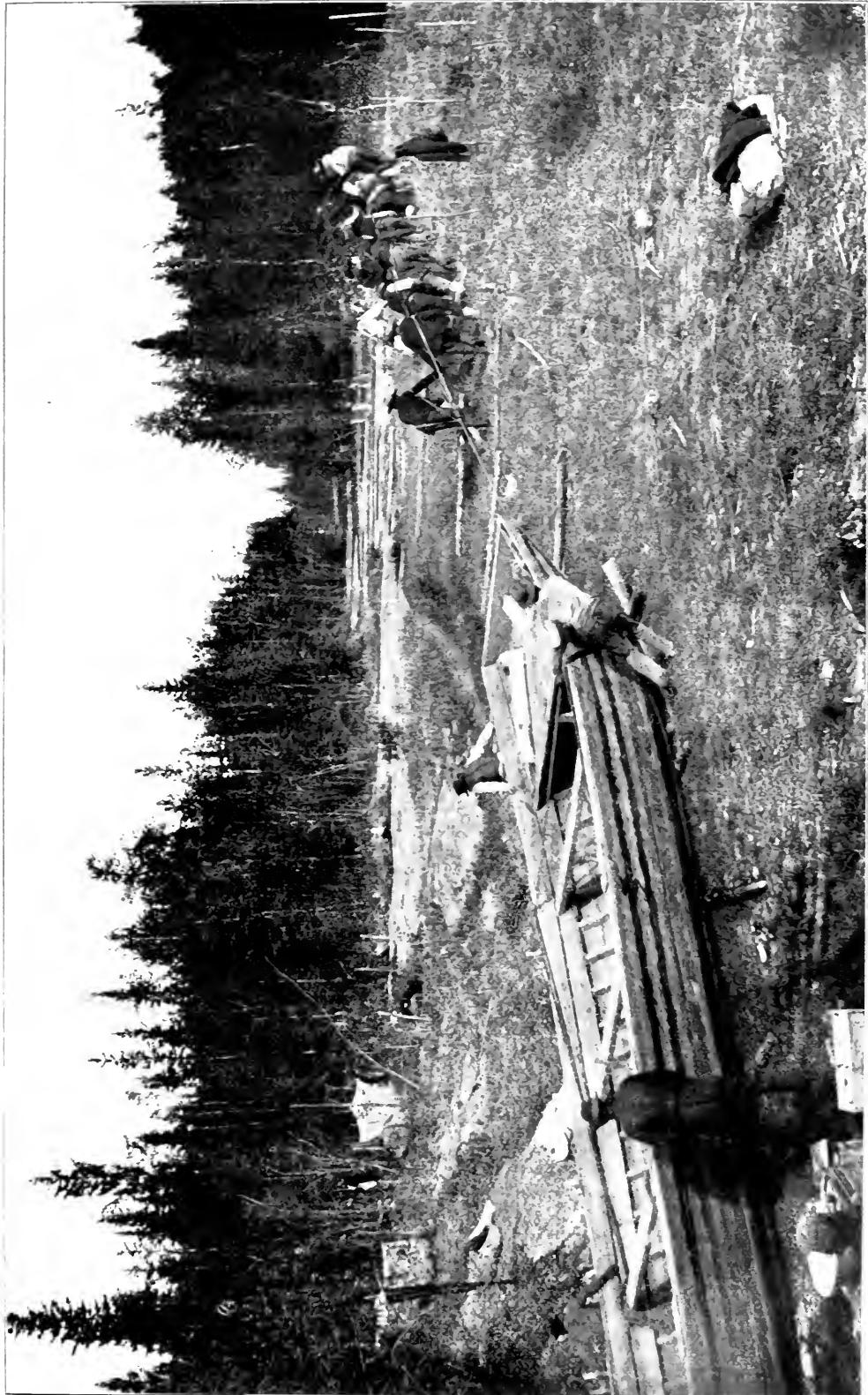
To this day some old men in that tribe and the neighbouring ones are liable to be found stark naked, without seeming in the least to be put out

<sup>1</sup> The literal translation of this word is "fire-bag".

<sup>2</sup> "A Journal of Voyages" p. 244.

<sup>3</sup> "Voyages from Montreal", vol. II, p. 97.

<sup>4</sup> *Ubi suprà*, p. 235.



Portaging. (Slave River.)



by what, to people of more refined moral sense, would be an awkward predicament. Young children were formerly left without any covering for quite a few years after they could walk by themselves. At the present time boys under five or six years of age wear buttonless breeches which are open before and behind, and nobody seems to mind the inconveniences which this particularity causes to modest eyes. The native mothers are pruder in connection with children of their own sex.

Generally, the women did not wear breech-clouts. The aprons or petticoats in which they were dressed allowed them to dispense with these. It would seem, however, that, among the primitive Slave or Dog-Rib females a desideratum in this respect was noticed by Mackenzie, who writes that they "have no covering on their private parts, except a tassel of leather which dangles from a small cord, as it appears, to keep off the flies, which would otherwise be very troublesome"<sup>1</sup>.

In the north especially, the Dénés' lack of cleanliness is on a par with the natural bluntness of their sense of propriety as we understand it. All the explorers have expatiated on the slovenly habits and resulting filthiness of the northeastern tribes. All things considered, much of this may be laid at the doors of their wretched condition under the unsparing climes of the north and the necessity of attending, first, to the struggle for life which, in their desolate land, is certainly no figure of speech. Yet, it cannot be gainsaid that the fact that they slept in their daily dresses and never washed them was responsible for a state of dirtiness which pleased neither the eyes nor the olfactory organ. Their fine leathern costume once donned was never laid aside until out of use, and it soon acquired a dingy look and an odour which was perceived from quite a distance. If we add to this the continual manipulation of grease, bones and marrow, joined to other unmentionable operations which were necessities of their daily lives, we will get some idea of the state to which the finest dress was soon reduced.

Another consequence of this uncleanness was the acquisition and propagation of vermin. This, however, did not trouble them in the least. When idle by the fireside, they would slothfully hunt for it and crunch it with relish. This habit, repugnant as it is to our feelings, is still in honour amongst them, and of a sunny day nothing is more common than to see, for instance, two females ridding the heads of one another of those parasites. Ridding, did I say. This is not the proper word, for the obliged party is the active, not the passive, one. *De gustibus non est disputandum!*

### **Washing and Personal Habits.**

In the south, perhaps because the women are not condemned to such a life of universal drudgery as in the north, washing was often practised. When

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<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 245.

soiled, the garments of the Hupas were cleaned with water and the bulbs of *Chlorogalum pomeridianum*. I am inclined to believe that the larger pieces of the Carrier wearing apparel, their cloaks and blankets when of a washable material, were sometimes cleaned by being trampled under foot in the shallow water covering the clayey beaches of their lakes. At all events, I have repeatedly seen their women treat in that manner the woollen blankets they now use.

A circumstance which gives strength to my surmise is the fact that nowadays soap is called *la-t'laes* in Carrier, a compound word which means literally "hands-mud", and implies that the article thereby denominated is now to the hands and face what mud or clay was formerly for the soiled pieces of clothing. Indeed Harmon says expressly that the Indians he met "do not understand the art of making soap . . . When their clothing consists of leather, they occasionally cleanse it by rubbing it over with a ball of white earth. This earth, which is the same which we use for white washing, they moisten, and mould into balls, and thus preserve it for use"<sup>1</sup>.

William of Rubruck, St. Louis' envoy to the Great Khan in 1253, says of the Tatars or Mongols: "They never wash their clothes. Cleanliness is in no more favour with the men than with their ladies, and their mode of washing their faces and hands is by filling their mouths with water and squirting it over them"<sup>2</sup>. Let the sociologist only substitute Dénés for Mongols and he will have an exact idea of what prevailed but yesterday among the former. No other mode of washing the hands and face obtained among the Chilcotins, as long as I remained with them, and many individuals of their wildest bands would not even do as much.

In the summer months the young people bathe very freely and without as much as a thread on their bare skin. They all seem to be born good swimmers. In Harmon's time grown up people were also expert in the art of natation, and he remarks that "this is the only time when the married people wash themselves"<sup>3</sup>.

Yet, the northern Dénés were not without taking some care of their persons. But bodily comfort, not any regard for the requirements of cleanliness, was then their moving spirit. Arthur Dobbs, the very first author who ever wrote of them, gives an account of their daily toilet which I reproduce, not only because of its early date, but also because it is as accurate to-day with regard to the exposed parts of the body as it was 154 years ago. It is also precious as adding to our knowledge of the aboriginal attire such as exhibited at that early period on the shores of Hudson Bay. He writes:

<sup>1</sup> "A General Account of the Indians on the East Side of the Rocky Mountains", p. 277.

<sup>2</sup> *Relation des Voyages en Tartarie*, Bergeron.

<sup>3</sup> "An Account of Indians living West of the Rocky Mountains", p. 246.

"In winter, when they go abroad, which they must do in all weathers, to hunt and shoot for their daily food, before they dress they rub themselves all over with bears grease, or oil of beavers, which does not freeze, and also rub all the fur of their beaver coats, and then put them on; they also have a kind of boots or stockings of beavers skin well oiled, with the fur inwards, and above them they have an oiled skin laced about their feet, which keeps out the cold, and also water, when there is no ice or snow; and by this means they never freeze, nor suffer any thing by cold. In summer also, when they go naked, they rub themselves with these oils or grease, and expose themselves to the sun, without being scorched, their skins always being kept soft and supple by it; nor do any flies, bugs, or musketoes, or any noxious insect ever molest them. When they want to get rid of it they go into the water, and rub themselves all over with mud or clay, and lets (*sic*) it dry upon them, and then rub it off; but whenever they are free from the oil, the flies and musketoes immediately attack them, and oblige them, again to anoint themselves<sup>1</sup>."

In the north the men carry themselves erect and walk with a light step. But the women, either from the habit of sinking under heavy burdens or as a result of the infirmities peculiar to their sex which accidents consequent on their state of mitigated slavery bring on, have ordinarily a most ungainly gait, even when unloaded. The first explorers also uniformly remarked the generally depressed expression of the northern Déné females, as contrasted with the playful and imperious demeanour of their lords and masters.

It is perhaps owing to this dependent condition of the women and their almost constant state of fatigue that, even to the present day, they never sit on anything, but invariably squat on the ground or on the floor. The men will occasionally imitate them in this respect. If standing or walking, you must be careful not to set your arms akimbo if you would not seem to court thereby the jibes and jeers of your fellows. That posture is deemed a token of ridiculous pretensions.

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<sup>1</sup> "An Account of the Countries adjoining to Hudson's Bay", by Arthur Dobbs, London, 1744.

## CHAPTER VII.

**Mental and Moral Characteristics.**

It is especially while dealing with the mental or moral make up of a people that the ethnographer feels a degree of satisfaction who has not to depend, in forming an estimate on the object of his studies, on the disconnected accounts of travellers, who are generally more or less biassed by the circumstances which accompanied their passage through the countries whose inhabitants they strive to describe. Nothing short of a long sojourn in the midst of that people and the perfect possession of its language can enable one to understand its psychic characteristics. Language is the mirror of the soul. Therefore you cannot obtain an authoritative knowledge of a race of human beings without being conversant with their language.

We shall soon see that the same traits of the northern Dénés' mental conformation have been described in directly opposite terms by different authors who were either prejudiced one way or another by personal reasons, or unjudiciously applied the old axiom *ab uno disce omnes*. I am even presumptuous enough to imagine that a thoroughly correct conception of the character of the northern tribes will help considerably towards forming an accurate idea of the southern group, different though it is in many ways.

Apparently, the two extremes of indomitable ferocity and pusillanimous meekness are to be found within the Déné nation. Two names are by themselves sufficient to prove this. I need only mention the Apaches on the one hand, and the Hare Indians on the other, to make even the general reader realize the unbridgeable gulf that separates the southernmost from the northernmost division of the family.

**The terrible Apaches.**

Of the former Miguel Venegas, the Spanish historian of California, gave in 1758 a portrait which could not be improved upon at the present day. "Within a circuit of three hundred leagues", he wrote, "the Apaches reside in their small rancherias erected in the valleys and in the breaches of the mountains. They are cruel to those who have the misfortune to fall into their hands; and amongst them are several apostates... They have not naturally any great share of courage; but the little they can boast of is extravagantly increased on any good success. In war they rather depend upon

artifice than valour; and on any defeat submit to the most ignominious terms, but keep their treaties no longer than suits their convenience. His Majesty has ordered that if any require peace, it should be granted, and even offered, to them before they are attacked. But this generosity they construe to proceed from fear... These people, during the last eighty years past, have been the dread of Sonora, no part of which was secure from their violence... Of late years, the insolence of these savages has been carried to the most audacious height from the success of some of their stratagems... The Apaches penetrate into the province from different passes, and, after loading themselves with booty, will travel in one night fifteen, eighteen or twenty leagues. To pursue them over mountains is equally dangerous and difficult, and in the levels they follow no paths. On any entrance into their country, they give notice to one another by smokes or fires; and at a signal they all hide themselves. The damages they have done in the villages, settlements, farms, roads, pastures, woods and mines are beyond description; and many of the latter, though very rich, have been forsaken”<sup>1</sup>.

The Spaniards were indeed well qualified to describe the Apaches and their ways. They knew them but too well, especially since 1680, when these savages fell upon the foreigners' settlements which they destroyed, and were afterwards constantly at war with them. The Apaches are, with their congeners, the Navahoes, “the savages by whose means the whole country has been almost swept of its inhabitants, and changed from a fertile garden into a barren waste”<sup>2</sup>. This was written in 1869, and reflects more or less the gloom that fell over the land of the southern Dénés as a consequence of the wars which followed the American occupation of their ancestral homes.

The constant warfare which this occasioned caused another American author to call the Apaches “the most cruel and barbarous race of Indians living on the American continent”<sup>3</sup>. To the whites of northern Mexico the Apaches, by their daring raids and cruelties, had by that time become a veritable terror. “The whole people at last became so terrified, that if they heard of a band of Apaches fifty miles off, they very frequently left everything and fled”<sup>4</sup>.

That they are not as devoid of courage as the above quoted Spanish writer imagined was abundantly proved by the dashing raids of one of their last leaders, Victorio, whose main exploits took place between 1878 and 1880. Then, at the head of only 250 or 300 fighting men opposed by more than four times as many well armed United States troops, “this warrior usually

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by W. A. Bell in “New Tracks in North America”, vol. I, pp. 233—34.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid., ibid.*, p. 178.

<sup>3</sup> “The Marvellous Country”, p. 43.

<sup>4</sup> “New Tracks in North America”, vol. I, p. 187.

inflicted severer punishment than he suffered. In his raids 200 citizens of New Mexico, and as many more of Mexico, were killed. At one time, the band was virtually surrounded by a force of more than 2000 cavalry and several hundred Indian scouts, but Victorio eluded capture, and fled across the Mexican border, where he continued his bloody campaign<sup>1</sup>.

The way he defended himself with his last 100 followers who, surrounded on all sides by Mexican troops, "refused to surrender until Victorio, who had been wounded several times, finally fell dead"<sup>2</sup>, denotes more than simple courage. Heroism is a word scarcely too strong under the circumstances.

Will the reader have a more recent appreciation of the Apache character? Here is what the representative of the United States among one of their bands wrote of his wards in his last official report: "The progress of these people, as a whole, is not sufficiently manifest to afford much encouragement. While certain individual members of the tribe have renounced those inherited tendencies and forsaken those racial characteristics which have so long constituted barriers to their advancement, it is a fact that a great many members, notably the old women, have determined that they will never — no, never — abandon their nomadic habits. They were born savages, have relapsed into savagery and will die savages. They cling tenaciously to savage customs, cultivate that hatred of the white man which is innate, exert every influence to prevent the young from adopting the pursuits of civilized life, and thus constitute a mill-stone around the neck of the tribe against which the younger element must constantly struggle or else be drowned in that sea of barbarism from which the white man is endeavouring to rescue them"<sup>3</sup>.

### The timid Hare.

Let now the kind reader leave for a moment the mountain fastnesses and the parched plains of the south for the desolate wastes of the frozen north. The first thing that will strike him in the brothers of the Apaches settled there will be their excessive timidity and their incomparable meekness. All the explorers are agreed on this point, and, for once, their testimony is the very image of truth.

Samuel Hearne was himself so cowardly that he evidently stood in fear of them. He could not well stultify himself by insisting too much on their excessive timorousness, especially after the discreditable occurrences he had to record as taking place in his company, occurrences which a man with a minimum of nerve and influence would have easily prevented. Yet he could

<sup>1</sup> From the advance proofs of a Hand-book of the Indians kindly sent me by Prof. W. H. Holmes, Director of the Bureau of Ethnology, Washington.

<sup>2</sup> Article "Apache", *op. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> Rep. of U. S. Govt. Agent Mescalero Agency, 1904.

not help remarking that "they are the mildest tribe of Indians that trade at any of the Company's settlements"<sup>1</sup>.

Mackenzie says that "the Chepewyans are sober, timorous, and vagrant"<sup>2</sup>. Richardson calls them "an unwarlike people and averse to shedding blood"<sup>3</sup>. Of the Hares especially he writes that "they are, like the rest of the nation, a timid race, and live in continual dread of the Eskimos, whom they suppose not only to be very warlike and ferocious, but also endowed with great conjuring powers, by which they can compass the death of an enemy at a distance. The possession of fire-arms does not embolden the Tinnè to risk an open encounter with the Eskimo bowmen; and unless when they are assembled in large numbers, as we found them at the Ramparts, they seldom pitch a tent on the banks of the river, but skulk under the branches of a tree, cut down so as to appear to have fallen naturally from the brow of the cliff; and they do not venture to make a smoke, or rear any object that can be seen from a distance. On the first appearance of a canoe or boat, they hide themselves, with their wives and children, in the woods, until they have reconnoitred and ascertained the character of the object of their fears. More than once in our descent of the river, when we had landed to cook breakfast or supper, and were not at all aware of the vicinity of natives, a family would crawl from their hiding places and come to our fire"<sup>4</sup>".

Concerning another northern tribe here is a little episode which well illustrates their characteristic timidity. The explorer Thomas Simpson writes: "On the evening of the 6th of December [1837] a few families of Dog-ribs arrived, in the utmost consternation, from the bay discovered by me to the eastward. They had seen strange tracks of *round* snow-shoes and the smoke of distant fires, and, abandoning everything had fled for their lives — burrowing at night under the snow; supposing that either the Esquimaux or Copper Indians had invaded their lands<sup>5</sup>". Simpson thought at first that the strangers might have been some of Captain Back's party from Repulse Bay, and with the greatest difficulty he eventually prevailed upon three young men to accompany him in his reconnoitring. All he found was the remains of an old fire and the camping place of a single person who ultimately proved to be a Cree Indian who was packing the Hudson's Bay Company's mail. On Simpson intimating his opinion to that effect, his companions "remained unconvinced, and, with the exaggeration of an alarmed fancy, declared they had seen a line of fires stretching along the mountains towards the Copper-mine River"! Such is the magnifying power of fear.

<sup>1</sup> "A Journey from Prince of Wales Fort", p. 310.

<sup>2</sup> "Voyages from Montreal", vol. I, p. CLXXV.

<sup>3</sup> "Arctic Searching Expedition", vol. II, pp. 13—14.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 212.

<sup>5</sup> "Narrative of the Discoveries on the North Coast of America", p. 209.

Another portion of the same tribe whom that explorer met did not belie their national reputation for timidity. A camp of Dog-ribs stood on the opposite bank, he wrote under date July 1, 1837; "they were much alarmed, and were taking to flight when we called out to them who we were<sup>1</sup>".

### In the West.

Mackenzie had found the same ridiculous shyness — though somewhat diversified by sly shows of impotent aggressiveness — even on the west side of the Rocky Mountains among the first Carriers he met. Though Harmon calls them a brave people<sup>2</sup>, they no sooner perceived the strangers peacefully gliding over the waters of the Fraser, than they madly bolted away, yelling and shouting until they were out of reach, at the same time discharging their arrows at the intruders.

Nor is this pusillanimity of the northern Dénés restricted to individuals. It is contagious among them, and time and again takes the form of a veritable nervous disorder resulting in panics that momentarily deprive whole bands of their senses. As Father Petitot wrote thirty years ago, "chaque année pendant l'été, la peur se communique également à eux d'une manière épidémique et déraisonnable. Ils vivent alors dans des transes continues et dans la crainte d'un ennemi imaginaire, qui les poursuit sans cesse et qu'ils croient voir de partout, bien qu'il n'existe nulle part<sup>3</sup>".

This relates to the northeastern Dénés. I may be allowed to quote what I wrote myself of the Carriers, because I could not improve to-day on what I said twelve years ago. "On pourrait presque dire que la lâcheté est un de leurs traits caractéristiques. Bien qu'ils constituent la plus fière et la plus progressive des tribus dénées de l'ouest, il ne se passe presque pas d'été que quelque parti n'accoure au village éperdu et tremblant, et pourquoi? Ils ont vu, disent-ils, ou simplement entendu des hommes des bois évidemment animés d'intentions hostiles et ils s'estiment fortunés d'avoir pu échapper sains et saufs. Là-dessus grande frayeur dans les loges, tumulte indescriptible dans le camp. Vous avez beau faire pour les rassurer, essayant du ridicule quand les bonnes paroles ne suffisent pas; vous en êtes pour vos peines. La peur est plus forte que vos remontrances. Chacun est charitalement averti par les prétendus voyants de ne pas s'aventurer seul dans la forêt, et, après le coucher du soleil, toutes les portes sont soigneusement fermées à clef<sup>4</sup>".

I remember trying vainly to convince of their folly people who pretended to have heard at night an Indian living 160 miles from their own village, by going out with them and showing them that the stranger was not there.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 94—95.

<sup>2</sup> "An Account of the Indians Living on the West Side of the Rocky Mountains", p. 243.

<sup>3</sup> *Monographie des Déné-Dindjié*, p. XXI.

<sup>4</sup> *Au Pays de l'Ours Noir*, p. 63. Paris, 1897.

He had lately lost by drowning a nephew of his, and on that account he was supposed to be lurking about, in order to get satisfaction for his misfortune by doing away with any strange Indian he might meet. Hence the fears of my people, and their contention that he was hiding somewhere in the outskirts of the village. As nobody could be found, I naively imagined they must be satisfied that fear had had the better of their judgment. But no. As I started home, they set upon making a speech, turned in the direction of the supposed hiding place of the would-be murderer, imploring him to spare them, begging him to state what he wanted of them, promising him all kinds of gifts if he would let them alone, etc. All the while the object of their dread was perhaps 200 miles away! Such are the northern Dénés.

### **The Chief characteristics of the Nation.**

How are we to account for so diametrically different psychic constitutions in tribes otherwise so closely related? Of course, we must not overlook the alterations resulting from admixture of blood in the southern Dénés. Their captives generally married in the ranks of the captors, and a more manly race was the consequence of such unions, just in the same way as, from a physiological standpoint, we have seen commiscegenation improving the stock in the north. But this would be begging the question: in order to be able to make captives they must already have been possessed of some degree of valour.

I think that the main reason for these remarkable differences between southern and northern Dénés, apart from the immense superiority of the material conditions of the former over the latter, lies in the chief characteristic of the whole nation, a characteristic which, common to all the tribes, is nevertheless the main source of their very psychic diversity. I wish to impress on my reader this all important fact: at whatever age he may be and under whatever climes he may live, the Déné is nothing but a child. His mind never outgrows that stage of culture. All the Dénés, men or women, are and remain simply grown up children. Their physical constitution undergoes a normal development, but their minds' activities are only on the lines of childhood.

Being a child all his life long, the Déné is, as a matter of course, restless. Being restless, he is nomadic, and cannot bear the restraints of authority. As a nomad, he must have new land, which he will never stoop to cultivate: hence his inroads on the preserves of his neighbours and the consequent conflicts. Because he ignores authority, he becomes when opposed a regular anarchist, to whom all means are good that help secure his ends. And as he still remains a child, though a nomad and an anarchist, he will shrink from attacking you openly. He will rather strike at you in the back, unless despair or the very requirements of life-preservation force him to act more

manfully. In other words, he is treacherous: a typical savage. And here we have the Apache naturally evolved from the child-like northerner.

If the members of that forward tribe became so desperate in their dealings with the Spaniards and the Americans, I feel no doubt that it was owing to that innate restlessness, which made them contemplate with abhorrence what they considered their enslaving or the curbing of their roving propensities intended by the pale-faced strangers. In their struggles they were fighting for dear life, such as they understood it. Liberty, that is, in their minds the unbridled restlessness of children, was their ultimate object, no less than the avenging of the undoubted wrongs they suffered at the hands of the intruders. The same conditions did not obtain in the north, where the population was practically homogeneous, and there was no incentive to plunder.

Being a child, the Déné is again a great imitator. In fact his remarkable receptivity and its innumerable manifestations in his social economy might occupy our attention in the course of several chapters. As a child he is also very credulous, and therefore not a little superstitious. For the same reason he is a past master in the art of telling untruths with the appearance of the greatest sincerity. When not actually lying he generally exaggerates, as he can hardly tell the plain truth, but must inevitably either majorate or minorate, according to the requirements of his personal interests. His very language partakes of his nature in this respect. Most dialects have, for instance, no synonym for the adjective "several": you must say either "a few" or "many."

Because he is a child the Déné will not scruple to flatter, nor is he above begging, especially from strangers. The same moral condition is also responsible for the reputation he has acquired of being ignorant of the sense of gratitude. This is due mostly to his being too fickle and inconstant to manifest for any length of time the feeling which does indeed affect him momentarily.

It is also owing to the fact of his being a child that he is, as a rule, more honest than people of our race. Like good children, again, the Dénés will in most cases be kind to one another, avoiding to contradict their fellows or tell them anything disagreeable. They are also affectionate, and exceedingly fond of their parents and relatives.

But the bad child will occasionally assert itself in them. When they do get angry, they will rage and storm and shout and fight, or seem to fight, doing generally more execution with their tongues than with their fists, though, when really excited, they may be guilty of any excess and perpetrate the most unspeakable cruelties. Before the strong they will crawl, but the weak and helpless they will rule with a rod of iron. Hence their lack of consideration for their women, at least in the north. For, cruelty is another appanage of childhood. Only, instead of tormenting brutes, as is too often done by children, the Déné man will make his weaker fellows, or those of

other races he takes at a disadvantage, the butt of all the buffetings prompted by his childish fury.

### The Dénés' Fondness for Exaggerations.

It is foreign to my purpose to enter into anything like elaborate details in corroboration of my assertions concerning each and every one of the above mentioned traits of the Déné character. A few extracts from the relations of the first explorers who came into contact with them will, however, be welcome as explaining still further my meaning.

And first as to their inability to state the mere unvarnished truth and their childish exaggerations. To this feature of their mental make up we owe the very first adequate account of their country and themselves. The Dénés who traded on Hudson Bay in the first half of the eighteenth century never tired of extolling the richness of a copper mine, which was said to exist in their hunting grounds. A. Dobbs, in his "Account of the Countries adjoining to Hudson's Bay", constantly refers to it, and the report on the condition of the same part of the world<sup>1</sup> published five years later (1749) also mentions it more than once. And no wonder, since, according to Hearne, the Indians "represented this mine to be so rich and valuable, that if a factory were built at the river, a ship might be ballasted with the oar [sic for ore], instead of stone, and that with the same ease and dispatch as is done with the stones at Churchill River. By their account the hills were entirely composed of that metal, all in handy lumps, like a heap of pebbles"<sup>2</sup>. This was indeed encouraging.

"But", continues the disappointed explorer, "their account differed so much from the truth, that I and almost all my companions expended near four hours in search of some of this metal, with such poor success that, among us all, only one piece of any size could be found." And so the much coveted factory or trading post, the expectation of which was mostly responsible for the native exaggerations, never materialized.

The next explorer of the Dénés' country was A. Mackenzie. The aborigines he found in the far north did not by any means differ in this respect from their eastern congeners. "The information which they gave respecting that river," he writes in the first volume of his "Voyages," "had so much of the fabulous, that I shall not detail it: it will be sufficient just to mention their attempts to persuade us that it would require several winters to get to the sea, and that old age would come upon us before the period of our return: we were also to encounter monsters of such horrid shapes and destructive powers as could only exist in their wild imaginations"<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> "Report from the Committee appointed to enquire into the State and Condition of the Countries adjoining to Hudson's Bay", London, 1749.

<sup>2</sup> "A Journey from Prince of Wales Fort", p. 173.

<sup>3</sup> "Voyages from Montreal", vol. I, p. 232.

Mackenzie had then reached the land of the Hare Indians, and was not far from that of the Loucheux, the Eskimos' neighbours. A different cause led to the same exaggerations. Only, in the case of the Yellow-Knives, they wanted the traders to establish a post among them and save them the inconvenience of long journeys to the coast of Hudson Bay: hence the attractive picture of the richness of the copper mine. In Mackenzie's case, his men were averse to traversing the country of the dreaded Eskimos, and their kinsmen were only too glad to help them out of their difficulty by ridiculously exaggerating distances and the character of the natives they would have to meet.

Speaking of distances, Thomas Simpson relates a circumstance which well illustrates how they are sometimes shamefully exaggerated by the Dénés when such a step serves their ends. He once asked his native guide how far a certain branch of a watercourse led. He, apprehending the white man desired to explore it, answered: "Ten days' journey without a tree to make a fire." On being directed to make a chart of the inlet on the snow, he drew a map showing a channel which, from verbal explanations and the fact the Indian admitted that one could by slow travelling encamp half-way the first night, the explorer judged must not have been more than twenty miles long.

The same author gives another instance of the Dénés' exaggerating powers which is perhaps still more typical. Slightly condensed, his account is to the effect that, having persuaded a party of native hunters to withdraw towards a lake he calls Kabash, they had scarcely been off a few hours when one of the old men was seen returning in great haste. He began vociferating long before he came up to Simpson's camp, his violent gestures denoting some terrible calamity. "They are all dead", he cried out. "Blacky [a young hunter] is blown up with gunpowder, and his little brothers are dead also!" And he renewed his clamour. A young man who happened to be there remarked shortly after: "The old man does not lament hard enough for any one to have died. I will go and see."

He found the Indians about three miles off, all alive and well, with the exception of Blacky who had had his hands slightly scorched by an explosion of a small quantity of gunpowder which he kept in a handkerchief!<sup>1</sup> Whereupon Simpson very properly remarks: "It is a general rule among the traders not to believe the first story of an Indian." A Déné is never supposed, even by his countrymen, to tell the truth in his first account of any unusual event. He is listened to in silence, and after a while a series of cross-examinations, as it were, are intended to bring out as much of it as possible. But even then due allowance must be made for the exaggerations, one way or another, which hardly any Déné can avoid.

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<sup>1</sup> "Narrative of the Discoveries on the North Coast of America", pp. 326—27.

This point of their character must now be fairly well established. Yet I must be excused for still quoting another explorer in confirmation of the same. The reader will thereby be in a better position to appreciate the extent to which it is spread and the uniformity with which it has been noticed. Richardson writes: "It is not, however, merely at such times . . . that truth is violated, but on almost every occasion . . . A story which was at first a pure invention, or perhaps, a perversion of some simple occurrence, becomes so changed by the additions it receives in its transmission from individual to individual, that it deceives the originators, and if it bears on the safety of the community, may spread consternation among them, and occasion a hasty flight"<sup>1</sup>.

### **Their Shrewdness.**

They realize themselves that this lack of adherence to the sober truth is one of their national foibles. They are not ashamed of it, though they hate to be called liars, but they take it as a matter of course. Nay, they even deem it an evidence of smartness, which impels them to further their own interests. This is so true that, after you have resided long enough in their midst to become acquainted with this particular trait of their character, they will never commence a speech leading to a request for a favour without cautioning you against confounding them with the rest of their fellows. Theirs is usually an exact duplicate of the Pharisee's prayer. "I am not like the other Indians," they will say; "I have not two tongues, but only one, which never tells anything but the truth." After this exordium, if they perceive that you take the bait, they hazard the most plausible — or sometimes impossible — story with a view to enlist your sympathies and win their point.

For, allied to this propensity for childish exaggeration is a degree of shrewdness and strategic ability in the furtherance of their ends which renders the northern Dénés a match for the most sagacious stranger. The Loucheux are more manly, but the eastern tribes are ever begging for assistance at the hands of the white fur traders, whom in their childish simplicity they take to be so wealthy that no amount of generosity can put them to any inconvenience. Their conduct towards new heads of trading posts is so graphically described by Hearne that I cannot resist the temptation of quoting him on this point.

"They take care always to seem attached to a new Governor, and flatter his pride, by telling him that they look up to him as the father of their tribe, on whom they can safely place their dependance; and they never fail to depreciate the generosity of his predecessor, however extensive that might have been, however humane or disinterested his conduct; and if aspersing the old, and flattering the new, Governor has not the desired effect in a

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<sup>1</sup> "Arctic Searching Expedition", vol. II, p. 19.

reasonable time, they represent him as the worst of characters, and tell him to his face that he is one of the most cruel of men; that he has no feeling for the distresses of their tribe, and that many have perished for want of proper assistance (which, if it be true, is only owing to want of humanity among themselves), and then they boast of having received ten times the favours and presents from his predecessor. It is remarkable that those are most lavish in their praises, who have never either deserved or received any favours from him. In time, however, this language also ceases, and they are perfectly reconciled to the man whom they would willingly have made a fool, and say, "he is no child, and not to be deceived by them!".

This page of the old trader is so ingeniously correct that, instead of having been written upwards of a century ago of the Dénés who then frequented Hudson Bay, it might pass for having been penned but yesterday to point out one of the weaknesses of my western Dénés.

### Their Receptiveness.

Next to their childish habit of exaggerating, and even more typical of the entire race, is the Dénés' most remarkable receptiveness, or propensity for borrowing from foreigners supposedly higher in the social scale customs and mythology, industries and technological items. In fact this national trait is so glaringly apparent throughout all their tribes, in the south as well as in the north, that we should devote thereto, not one or two paragraphs or sections, but several chapters. But as much of what is to follow in the course of this work is to be, in some measure, almost a continuous illustration of this psychological particularity, we may content ourselves here with a few quotations of general import, or bearing on points which we have already treated in the foregoing chapters.

"At the forts", wrote Sir John Franklin, "they strive to imitate the manners of the voyageurs and traders"<sup>2</sup>. This refers to the northeastern Dénés. Of the so-called Ingilik Loucheux we have already said that they conform to the fashion of shaving the crown of the head which prevails among their Eskimo neighbours. The members of the same tribe also "wear clothing much like that adopted by the Eskimo"<sup>3</sup>. This is from W. H. Dall, who moreover writes in another part of the work: "From constant intercourse and close proximity to the Innuit tribes of the coast, they have adopted many Innuit customs. Among these, that of wearing the labret is most conspicuous"<sup>4</sup>.

Of the Hupas the late Horatio Hale wrote that "these proud and masterful children of the savage north had been quick to adopt all the arts of incipient civilization which they found in their new abode. Their dress,

<sup>1</sup> "A Voyage from Prince of Wales Fort", pp. 308—9.

<sup>2</sup> "Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea", vol. II, p. 51.

<sup>3</sup> "Travels on the Yukon", p. 54.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 217.

implements and houses were copied from the neighbouring tribes of the Klamath River region"<sup>1</sup>. We will see that the same is equally true as regards the industries and mythology for which the Navahoes have since become famous.

Returning north, we notice with Fred. Whymper that the Ingalk Loucheux "use for cleansing purposes the liquid before mentioned as adopted by the Malemutes", viz. urine<sup>2</sup>. The Malemutes are Eskimos living in close proximity to the westernmost Loucheux. According to Th. Simpson, the Chippewayans' "only attempts at singing are borrowed from the Crees"<sup>3</sup>. The entire social organization and all the consequent practices prevailing in the west were likewise copied from the coast heterogeneous races. So were their mortuary customs and those of all the other Déné tribes, which varied according to the nature of those obtaining among their respective neighbours. Their habitations, arts and industries are practically duplicates of those in honour among the tribes with whom they came in contact.

In a word, the Dénés are possessed of such an innate consciousness of their own inferiority that, in the same way as children naturally imitate their elders, even so do these aborigines instinctively allow aliens to play over them the rôle of superiors whose manners they must ape and of models whom they must copy.

### **Their Cruelty.**

Meekness and cruelty are two moral attributes which seem to exclude one another. Yet it is incontestable that they are to be found side by side in the same Déné tribes. I shall not speak of the Apaches, who have no great reputation for mildness of temper. But peaceful and meek as their northern congeners undoubtedly are when in their normal condition, they are not any less cruel when provoked, or even with the weak without provocation, or again when they can take unfriendly people at a disadvantage.

I could expatiate on their lack of humanity to their own wives, who had formerly to do all the hard work, even to the dragging of their heavily loaded toboggans on the very day that they had been delivered of a child. I could enlarge on the unspeakable indignities and harsh treatment some of their tribes meted out to their widows and the lack of feeling or consideration they all display towards the old and the orphans. I could adduce as examples of their cruelty the numerous massacres in which they were the prime actors, and to which I shall have at least to refer when we come to the history of the nation. For the present a quotation or two from Hearne concerning the

<sup>1</sup> "Language as a Test of Mental Capacity", p. 86. Trans. Roy. Soc. Can., vol. IX, Sect. II, 1891.

<sup>2</sup> "Travel and Adventure in the Territory of Alaska", p. 154.

<sup>3</sup> "Narrative of the Discoveries on the North Coast of America", p. 165.

brutal slaughter, in 1771, of inoffensive Eskimos by his Déné companions will suffice for my purpose.

Having surprised a camp of those aborigines quietly at rest in their tents on the Coppermine River, the Dénés — Chippewayans and Yellow-Knives — soon made a start in their bloody work.

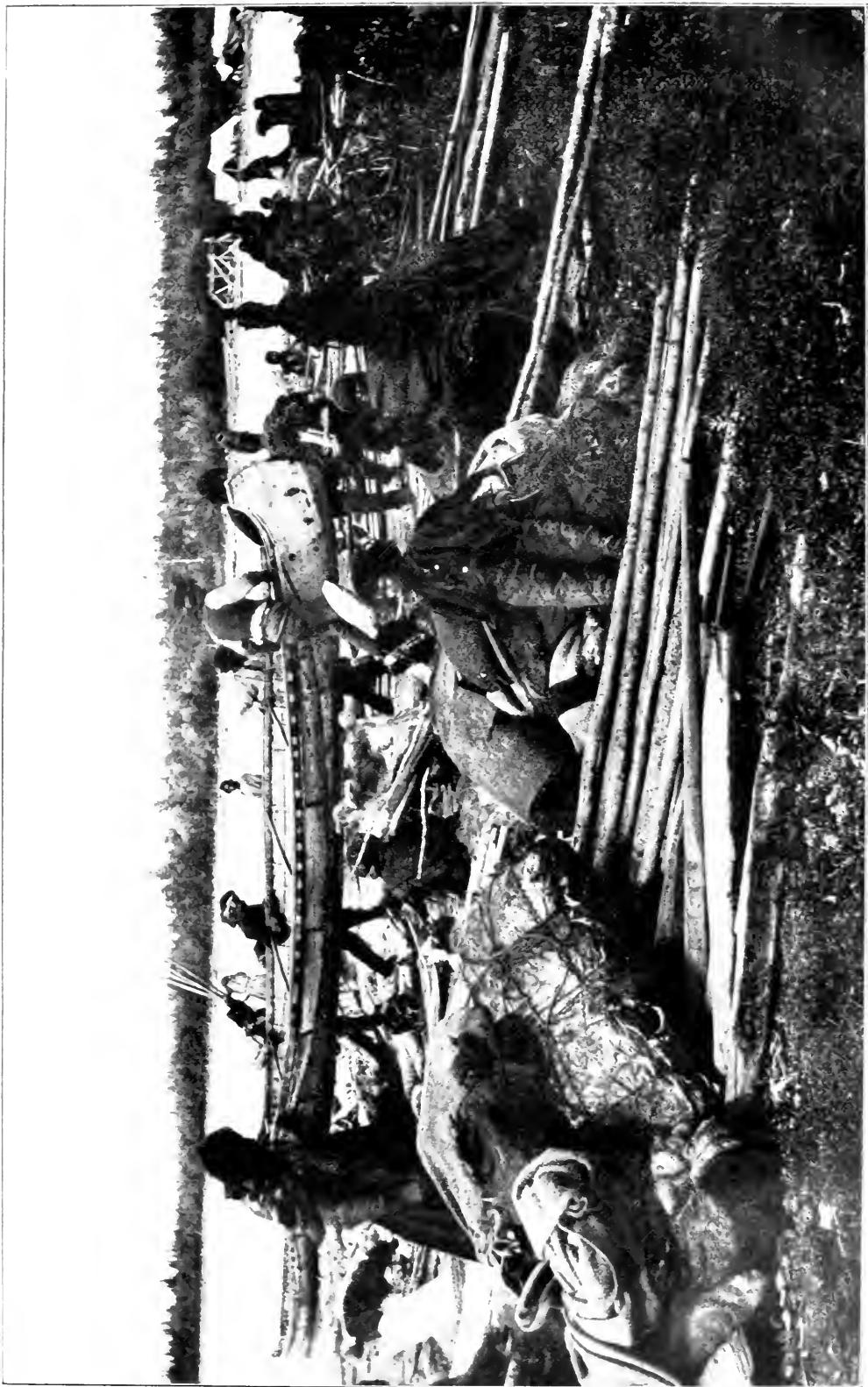
"In a few seconds", writes the hapless witness of the transaction, "the horrible scene commenced; it was shocking beyond description; the poor unhappy victims were surprised in the midst of their sleep, and had neither time nor power to make any resistance; men, women, and children, in all upwards of twenty, ran out of their tents stark naked, and endeavoured to make their escape; but the Indians having possession of all the landside, to no place could they fly for shelter. One alternative only remained, that of jumping into the water; but, as none of them attempted it, they all fell a sacrifice to Indian barbarity!"

"The shrieks and groans of the poor expiring wretches were truly dreadful; and my horror was much increased at seeing a young girl, seemingly about eighteen years of age, killed so near me, that when the first spear was stuck into her side she fell down at my feet, and twisted round my legs, so that it was with difficulty that I could disengage myself from her dying grasps. As two Indian men pursued this unfortunate victim, I solicited very hard for her life; but the murderers made no reply till they had stuck both their spears through her body, and transfixed her to the ground. They then looked at me sternly in the face, and began to ridicule me, by asking if I wanted an Esquimaux wife; and paid not the smallest regard to the shrieks and agony of the poor wretch, who was twining round their spears like an eel! Indeed, after receiving much abusive language from them on the occasion, I was at length obliged to desire that they would be more expeditious in dispatching their victim out of her misery, otherwise I should be obliged, out of pity, to assist in the friendly office of putting an end to the existence of a fellow creature who was so cruelly wounded. On this request being made, one of the Indians hastily drew his spear from the place where it was first lodged, and pierced it through her breast near the heart. The love of life, however, even in this most miserable state, was so predominant, that though this might justly be called the most merciful act that could be done for the poor creature, it seemed to be unwelcome, for though much exhausted by pain and loss of blood, she made several efforts to ward off the friendly blow"<sup>1</sup>.

Whereupon Hearne dilates on his terrible state of mind in beholding such atrocities. Had he previously shown himself enough of a man to win the savages' respect, it is more than likely that he would never have been placed in so painful a predicament. But who could have expected any show of

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<sup>1</sup> "A Journey from Prince of Wales Fort", pp. 153—55.



Back from the Hunt. Canoes with bales of furs and other impedimenta.



bravery in a man who was, three years after, to surrender to La Peyrouse without firing a shot a strong stone fort which had been forty years in building, and which "would have resisted the attack of a more considerable force"<sup>1</sup>.

But we wander from the awful scenes of the Dénés' cruelty by the banks of the Coppermine. The traveller adds: "The brutish manner in which these savages used the bodies they had so cruelly bereaved of life was so shocking, that it would be indecent to describe it". It must indeed have been so, for my pen refuses to transcribe even what he then says of the way the women's bodies were treated.

To complete the picture of this unholy transaction it only remains to add that, after having fired amidst another group of innocent Eskimos who were so ignorant of the use of fire-arms that they ran to examine the nature of the pieces of lead that flattened themselves against the rocks until one of their number was struck by a bullet, they finally came upon an old man of whose death they made so sure that Hearne remarks: "I verily believe not less than twenty had a hand in his death, as his whole body was like a cullender"<sup>2</sup>. The same revolting scene was soon after re-enacted in connection with an old woman. "There was scarcely a man who had not a thrust at her with his spear; and many in doing this aimed at torture rather than immediate death, as they not only poked out her eyes, but stabbed her in many parts very remote from those which are vital"<sup>3</sup>.

### Their great Honesty.

And yet these same people, savage as they undoubtedly are, can boast some excellent qualities. They are friendly and obliging towards one another, and regard rendering service to a fellow tribesman as a matter of course. They are passionately attached to their offspring; indeed, so very fond of them that they hardly ever correct them. This affection, though not of a demonstrative kind as among some nations, is fully reciprocated by the children. They are also progressive and yearn after knowledge, though too inconstant to apply themselves to any prolonged study. They are deeply religious, or, for the lack of true religion, profoundly superstitious. This natural propensity, when turned in the right direction, makes them ready adepts of Christianity, and they remain, as a rule, singularly attached to their faith.

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<sup>1</sup> Umfreville, one of the garrison, quoted by G. Bryce in his "History of the Hudson's Bay Company", p. 106. Toronto, 1900. Rev. J. West, who saw its ruins in 1823, says that "it appears to have been strongly fortified, and from its situation must have been capable of making a formidable resistance to an enemy; and it can never cease to be a matter of surprise that it should have been surrendered without firing a shot. The walls and bastions are still remaining, which are strewed with a considerable number of cannon, spiked, and of large calibre" ("The Substance of a Journal", p. 170).

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 158.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 159.

Add to this that, when not spoiled by contact with unscrupulous whites, they are remarkably honest. Speaking of the Loucheux Dall writes: "During a long experience I have never known of goods being meddled with or broken open if properly secured, no matter how lonely the situation of the cache, or how long it remained unvisited. 'A cache is sacred' is one of the axioms of the wilderness. This goes far to prove that the average of honesty among these Indians is higher than that which obtains among white men"<sup>1</sup>. He then adds that the Eskimos are less trustworthy, and again further on he says of the Loucheux: "They are more honest than the majority of uneducated whites, and much more so than the tribes who have been degraded by liquor"<sup>2</sup>.

Fred. Whymper writes of the same people: "At this, and other Ingelete villages, our goods lay unguarded in our absence; and I cannot recall a single case of proved dishonesty among them"<sup>3</sup>.

Of the Chippewayans Franklin similarly said that "it should be stated that instances of theft are extremely rare amongst them"<sup>4</sup> in spite of their abject poverty.

Richardson also dilates on what he terms "their strict honesty", observing that "the practice of the Tinnè with regard to the property of white people [differs] remarkably from their northern neighbours, the Eskimos, and their southern ones, the Crees, though the temptations to which they are exposed are equally great. No precautions for the safety of our property at Fort Confidence were required. The natives carefully avoided touching the magnetic instruments, thermometers, and other things placed outside the house, and could be trusted in any of the rooms without our finding a single article displaced. Our dining-hall was open to all comers; and though the smallness of our separate apartments caused us to exclude hangers-on, new comers were permitted to satisfy their curiosity respecting our occupations, and they always squatted themselves down at the door, and looked on in silence, wondering, as we were told, at our constant writing. From M. La Flèche, the intelligent missionary at Isle à la Crosse<sup>5</sup>, I received a similar character of the southern part of the nation, who, if they find any article left by the voyagers on the portages, are sure to bring it in to be claimed at the forts"<sup>6</sup>.

Doctor Richard King, who accompanied Captain G. Back in his overland journey to the shores of the Arctic Ocean, is even more explicit on this point, and the instances of the Dénés' honesty he quotes are sufficient to put to the blush many a Christian nation. "Their honesty is so strict", he writes,

<sup>1</sup> "Travels on the Yukon", p. 133.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 193—94.

<sup>3</sup> "Travel and Adventure in the Territory of Alaska", p. 154.

<sup>4</sup> "Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea", vol. II, p. 53.

<sup>5</sup> Who died Bishop of Three Rivers, Lower Canada.

<sup>6</sup> "Arctic Searching Expedition", vol. II, pp. 19—20.

"that, notwithstanding the frequent violations of the rights of property they witnessed among the traders, and but too often experienced in their own persons, they scrupulously avoided committing a single theft. To so great a degree of self-denial do they carry this principle even to the present time, that they will rather fast several days than consume a particle of provision which does not belong to them, even where there exists a certainty of replacing it. We had proof of this strict probity at Fort Reliance, both at regards the Chipewyan and Copper Indians, who were starved to the number of fifty with abundance of provision within their reach. Nor was this the effect of conscious weakness, since their number exceeded two hundred, while our whole force at that time consisted of a dozen individuals only"<sup>1</sup>.

Finally, I may perhaps be permitted to reproduce here what I wrote in another work concerning the Sékanais. "Parmi eux, un traiteur de fourrures pourra quelquefois aller tendre ou visiter ses pièges et ses collets, laissant son magasin ouvert sans craindre le moins du monde pour ses marchandises. Entre temps, un chasseur indigène viendra peut-être s'approvisionner de ce dont il aura besoin à même le stock du traiteur absent; mais il ne manquera jamais ou bien d'en avertir le propriétaire à son retour, ou bien d'y laisser un équivalent exact en pelleteries"<sup>2</sup>.

I know also of a Nahanaïs who, after having painfully trodden a distance of about twelve miles along a rough forest trail, scrupulously retraced his steps on perceiving that he had been given a bunch of matches over and above what he had paid for at the trading post. I cannot help wondering what the white man then thought of his own boasted civilization compared with the primitive simplicity which prompted an act entailing such personal inconvenience, in order that restitution might be made of an article hardly worth more than a few cents, and which had not been stolen.

### Scinduntur Doctores.

And yet, as all rules suffer exceptions, or indeed perhaps on account of that diversity of appreciations based on different circumstances and too hasty judgments to which I have already referred, we should probably add a slight shadow to this picture of the Dénés' honesty. According to Thomas Simpson, the Loucheux, whom he describes as "distinguished from every other Indian tribe with which we are acquainted by the frankness and candour of their demeanour"<sup>3</sup>, demanded and received for several years a gift or "blood-money" from the Eskimos on account of a fellow tribesman whom they claimed to have died of wounds resulting from a previous encounter

<sup>1</sup> "Narrative of a Journey to the Shores of the Arctic Ocean", vol. II, pp. 35—36. London, 1836.

<sup>2</sup> *Au Pays de l'Ours Noir*, pp. 115—16.

<sup>3</sup> "Narrative of the Discoveries", p. 100.

with that tribe, but who unluckily made his appearance as the annual tribute was being levied”<sup>1</sup>. But then all was evidently deemed fair against such enemies as the hated Innuit.

Again, Harmon gives the following rather unflattering character to the Carriers: “They are not in the habit of stealing articles of great value; but they are the slicest pilferers, perhaps, upon the face of the earth. They will not only pilfer from us, but, when favourable opportunities offer, they are guilty of the same low vice among their friends and relations”<sup>2</sup>. Allowing for a grain of exaggeration on the part of the trader, his statement is substantially correct. But the Carriers cannot be regarded as typical Dénés, and the foible mentioned by Harmon is more proper to children than to adults.

Other features of the Dénés’ moral character in connection wherewith travellers are more unaccountably at variance among themselves are the nation’s psychic dispositions, and its standing with regard to the moral virtues of hospitality and gratitude.

The Chippewayans are naturally morose, says Th. Simpson<sup>3</sup>, who thereby simply repeats Hearne’s assertion that the Northern Indians as a whole “are in general morose and covetous”<sup>4</sup>. But “they are not a morose people”, retorts Richardson, who adds: “On the contrary, when young and in a situation of security, they are remarkably lively and cheerful”<sup>5</sup>. Who is right? The reader has only to remember my initial statement concerning the infantile stage of the Dénés’ mental advancement, and his answer cannot fail to be correct. As there is hardly a more child-like race on the face of the earth, few people are so cheerfully disposed, or so “very good humoured”, as Whymper has it of the Loucheux he met<sup>6</sup>. “All, young and old, enjoy a joke heartily”, declares Richardson. Nothing is truer. They are constantly poking fun at one another, and if you are afflicted with any physical or moral defect, you will be the theme, for days or weeks, of endless pleasantries, not any too refined to be sure, but to them the occasion of a very enjoyable pastime.

I was going to add on my own account that they are great mimics, when I happened to fall on an identical remark in Richardson’s work, wherein the explorer says that “they readily ape the peculiarities of any white man”<sup>7</sup>. People of different tribes or villages, or, indeed, of their own band as well frequently come in for their share of innocent abuse. During my numberless missionary journeys in the company of four or five young

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 101.

<sup>2</sup> “An Account of the Indians”, p. 243.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 165.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 307.

<sup>5</sup> *Op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 13.

<sup>6</sup> “Travel and Adventure in the Territory of Alaska”, p. 153.

<sup>7</sup> *Op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 13.

men, the evenings and meal-times were usually made lively by their sallies concerning the natives we had left, or the mimicking of some peculiarity in the speech or garb of absent individuals. Hearne observes that this joviality of his would-be morose Chippewayans does not leave them even in times of prolonged fasting or great bodily exertion. Nay, the old explorer goes even so far as to confess that "examples of this kind were of infinite service to me, as they tended to keep up my spirits on those occasions with a degree of fortitude that would have been impossible for me to have done had the Indians behaved in a contrary manner"<sup>1</sup>.

Are they hospitable? No, declare Franklin and Richardson; yes, assert Th. Simpson and John West. On behalf of the negative side Franklin writes: "It could not be expected that such men should display in their tents the amiable hospitality which prevails generally among the Indians of this country. A stranger may go away hungry from their lodges, unless he possesses sufficient impudence to thrust, uninvited, his knife into the kettle, and help himself<sup>2</sup>." Richardson's statement in this respect is so much like Franklin's that the former author must have had the latter's book before him when he wrote that "hospitality is not a virtue which is conspicuous among the Dog-ribs." He then reproduces in slightly different terms Franklin's remark about helping oneself uninvited, ending by the identical observation also recorded by the latter that "the 'Tinné hold it to be mean to say much about a piece of meat<sup>3</sup>."

The above is in line with Dall's statement concerning the easternmost Loucheux that "avarice appears strongly in their characters<sup>4</sup>."

On the other hand, the Rev. John West, a Church of England minister who was a perfect stranger to the Indians he mentions, has the following in his journal under date 17th July, 1823: "The next day we passed Cape Churchill and came to a tent of Chipewyan or Northern Indians. The question was not asked if we were hungry, but immediately on our arrival the women were busily employed in cooking venison for us<sup>5</sup>." Thomas Simpson, who was not partial to the natives in general, has the same tale to tell. "These kind people were delighted to see us and offered us food", he writes of the Hare Indians he met<sup>6</sup>. When strangers, even whites who are supposed to be more of a source of revenue than anything else, are thus treated by untutored savages, it may be safely guessed that the first explorers I have quoted from have not the entire truth on their side. Dr. King goes even so far as to declare in an outburst of enthusiasm prompted by the treatment he received

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<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 70.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 52.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 18.

<sup>4</sup> "Travels on the Yukon", p. 194.

<sup>5</sup> "The Substance of a Journal During a Residence at the Red River Colony, pp. 165—66.

<sup>6</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 311.

himself at their hands that they "are characterized by such unbounded hospitality, as to be ever ready to share with their fellow-creatures, whether white or red men, the last morcel of food they possessed<sup>1</sup>."

The fact is that, as a rule, the Dénés are more hospitable to people of their own race than the whites usually are to unknown wayfarers. Nevertheless, owing probably to the state of penury which may be said to be chronic with the northern tribes, it is an implied understanding that he who gives shall receive some kind of compensation, either then and there, or on a similar occasion. *Do ut des*, is the rule with practically all the northern Dénés. On that account it would hardly be proper to call them generous, though they usually affect the greatest free-handedness, and the most insulting term in their whole vocabulary is the epithet stingy.

What about their sense of gratitude? There is hardly a more widespread fallacy than the notion that this is a sentiment totally unknown to the Indian. Harmon writes: "I never knew a Carrier to be grateful for a favour bestowed upon him<sup>2</sup>." Another fur trader, Ross Cox, has also the following anent the southern portion of the same tribe: "We have repeatedly afforded relief to numbers who were dying from starvation or disease, and who, but for our assistance, would have perished; yet ingratitude is so strongly implanted in their savage nature, that these very individuals, in periods of plenty, have been the first to prevent us from taking a salmon<sup>3</sup>." Long before, Hearne had gone as far as to state that the Northern Indians "seem to be entirely unacquainted even with the name of gratitude<sup>4</sup>." And yet Mackenzie relates of a young Déné whose wound he treated: "I was so successful that about Christmas my patient engaged in a hunting party and brought me the tongue of an elk: nor was he finally ungrateful. When he left me I received the warmest acknowledgments both from him and his relations with whom he departed for my care of him<sup>5</sup>." On the other hand, the account of the Carriers and Chilcotins by Ross Cox, or rather his informant Jos. McGillivray, is marked by gross exaggerations and not a few inaccuracies.

The ways of the Indian are totally different from those of the Caucasian. The former is not verbally demonstrative in his gratitude, and, as to the sentiment itself, though it certainly exists within him, we must not forget that with children this is liable to vanish much sooner than with white adults.

### Their morals.

As to the morals of the Dénés while still in their aboriginal state, their standard varied considerably according to the tribes. Some, like the Sékanais

<sup>1</sup> "Narrative of a Journey to the Shores of the Arctic Ocean", vol. II, p. 35.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 240.

<sup>3</sup> "Adventures on the Columbia River", p. 326. New-York, 1832.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 307.

<sup>5</sup> "Voyages from Montreal", vol. II, p. 12.

and generally all the mountain or intermediate Dénés, remained as chaste in their private lives as the members of any civilized community, if not more so. Others, and I regret to say perhaps the majority, had but little regard for chastity, though they never quite stooped to the licentiousness of the allophylic North Pacific races.

Hearne is our best authority in this respect, because his very lack of influence over those with whom he was in contact permitted him to see them live and act without that degree of restraint which usually accompanies the observation of foreign eyes. The revolting cases of abduction, rape and even incest to which he was an eye-witness do not certainly tend to confirm the popular notion of Arcadian innocence which is supposed to be the apanage of all primitive peoples. Far from me the wish to unnecessarily blacken the character of the aboriginal Dénés. Yet, to let the ethnologist have an inside into their morals before the introduction of the beneficent influence of the Gospel among them, I must have recourse to a quotation from Hearne. He relates his falling in with a party of strange Dénés, who were so poor that they did not possess one gun in their whole band, and writes:

"The villains belonging to my crew were so far from administering to their relief that they robbed them of almost every useful article in their possession; and to complete their cruelty, the men joined themselves in parties of six, eight, or ten in a gang, and dragged several of their young women to a little distance from their tents, where they not only ravished them, and that in so barbarous a manner, as to endanger the lives of one or two of them"<sup>1</sup>.

As to incest, while the same author declares that it was quite common among the Crees, he admits that only the "Athapuscow and Neheaway" were guilty of it, while all the other Dénés held that crime in abhorrence. My own experience goes to confirm this last observation. As evidence, however, of the really low standard of morality obtaining among the primitive Dénés, we must not fail to mention that in the north the momentary exchange of wives was regarded, not as a breach of propriety, but on the contrary as an unsurpassed token of friendship and the *nec plus ultra* of hospitality.

It is not a little strange after this to see Hearne warm in his praise of the Déné women, whom he declares to be "the mildest and most virtuous females" he ever saw in any part of North America<sup>2</sup>. He adds that "it is very uncommon to hear of their ever [having] been guilty of incontinency, not even those who are confined to the sixth or even the eighth part of a man"<sup>3</sup>.

As much could not unfortunately have been said of the Carrier women, whose lewdness was unsurpassed, according to John McLean<sup>4</sup>. Harmon also

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 285.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 126.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 128.

<sup>4</sup> "Notes of a Twenty-Five Years' Service in the Hudson's Bay Territory", vol. I, p. 264.

tells us of people of either sex belonging to the same tribe who confessed to having been guilty of incest or even bestiality. But these disorders I would consider due to the foreign blood flowing in their veins and the baneful influence of the coast tribes, on their morals.

### Minor Traits of their Character.

I have now barely space enough left me for mentioning a few other features of the Dénés' character. To say that they are credulous and inconstant is tantamount to repeating that they are grown up children. Hence their apparent bad faith in deserting their employers when engaged as guides, which travellers have so often deplored. Their well known improvidence springs also from the same general characteristic. When abundance reigns in their modest home, they will pass their time in cooking and eating. The family kettle is then hardly ever idle. And yet the next chapter will tell us to what extent they know the pangs of hunger and the straits of sheer starvation!

Of their treachery — a compound of childish weakness and cruelty — numberless instances could be adduced. I shall content myself with one, because it is typical. In the spring of 1850, a band of fourteen Loucheux, accompanied by three white employers of the fur traders, having surprised a party of ten Eskimos of the lower Mackenzie, were not without difficulty dissuaded from attacking them with their fire-arms — the strangers carried only bows and arrows.

It is pathetic to read of the suspicions that seem to have been hovering in the poor Eskimos' minds, and of their silent appeals for fair treatment at the hands of their whilom foes. When invited to approach their chief desired the Indians to put their guns aside. His request having been complied with, he fired all his arrows into the ground, and held up his bow and empty quiver to show that he had no more. The same ceremony was performed by all his companions, and bartering was commenced on the spot, two Eskimos (followed soon after by two more) being now dispatched to bring their large boat with the women and more furs.

Meanwhile the Loucheux invited the remaining Eskimos to come ashore and have a dance. The old Eskimo chief was the first to land, and as he did so he pulled off his frock and, appearing only in breeches and mocassins, he held up his arms and slapped his body as a sign that he carried no weapon. His companions did the same, and a lively dance was started on the opposite sides of a small creek. Presently one of the white men noticed a Loucheux skulking about, trailing his gun after him, which was at full cock. He prevailed upon him to take it back where the others had been left, which on examination were then found to be at full cock. To make a long story short, four of the now unsuspecting Eskimos fell on the sand victims of the

Loucheux' treachery. The others, though wounded, were not dispatched until the Indians had fired a second volley<sup>1</sup>.

To draw the reader's attention from these gruesome scenes and give in a few words the characteristics of the chief Déné tribes, we will say that the Apaches are the wildest, boldest and most unscrupulous of all; the Hares and Slaves are the most timid, credulous and generally affectionate. The Dog-Ribs are indolent, naive and filthy; the Yellow-Knives rather profligate and slightly over bearing; the Chippewayans, slovenly and religious, but weak before temptation; the Beavers, simple, careless and great gamblers; the Sékanais, credulous, honest and moral; the Nahanais, great imitators and not a little superstitious. The Loucheux are the most manly, cleanly and thrifty; the Babines are loud-mouthed and conservative of their old customs; the Carriers, progressive, proud and not altogether destitute of bravery, while the Chilcotins are more remarkable for their lack of meekness and their attachment to their aboriginal ideas, though fairly laborious. As to the Navahoes, they are incontestably the most industrious of all the tribes. Their mental faculties appear to be better developed, as evidenced by their long myths and elaborate ritual, though they are as superstitious, and withal as credulous, as their northern kin. Of the Hupas we may say that they are, as a rule, wide awake, fairly honest and religious almost to the point of mysticism.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. "Ten Months among the Tents of the Tuski", pp. 367—72.

## CHAPTER VIII.

**Economic Conditions.****General Condition of the Northern Dénés.**

"Life among the Indians is a constant struggle with nature, wrestling with hunger, cold and fatigue; the victory is ever uncertain, and always hard-earned"<sup>1</sup>. Nothing could be truer than these words of W. H. Dall's, and of all the native tribes none are less sure of their daily subsistence than the northern Dénés. It might be said that, hard and painfully laborious as is the life of the Eskimo owing to the climatic conditions of his habitat, his alimentary resources are less uncertain, because he has at his disposal the large mammals and other denizens of the sea, in addition to the land game and the sweet water fish.

As to the northern Déné, practically all his personal economic needs are supplied by the animal kingdom such as established on land. The flesh of the game he kills is his food, its hide his raiment, its fur the main object of his trade, its dressed skin the material of his carrying implements, and of the strings wherewith he weaves the trellis work of his snow-shoes and which, singly or twisted together, form the snares on which he depends mostly for his subsistence. Its bones and antlers, in their turn, furnish him with the *materia prima* not only of his cutting tools, such as scrapers to clean the hides or scrape off the sap of pines, which he relishes as an item of diet, and awls to sew his clothing and the bark of his canoe, but also of his arrow points, of his darts or harpoons which serve to procure new meat supplies in connection with the bow, whose strings are neatly made of twisted tendon shreds of the same animal. The inroads of our civilization on their economics have somewhat modified his condition by making him share in the results of our own industries, but he has remained what he was for ages immemorial, namely a strictly carnivorous being, who lives almost entirely on the fruits of his hunts, though some of the western tribes are as great fishermen as hunters.

As to tilling the soil, this was out of the question, first because the soil was unfit for agriculture over practically the whole of his domains, but chiefly on account of his own irresistible restlessness, which is one of the main causes of his nomadic habits. So that, with the inclement climes under which the threads of his wretched life unfold themselves, he has to put to as good

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<sup>1</sup> "Travels on the Yukon", p. 200.

account as possible every little item of his environment in connection where-with human ingenuity can exercise itself with a view to deriving therefrom some sort of self-sustenance.

An excellent instance of this ingenuity prompted by that life-preserving instinct which is innate in every animal being is recorded by the first exponent of the northern Dénés' sociology, and, wonderful to relate, this is to the credit of one of those despised members of their tribes who were reputed good for nothing else than abuse and slavery. In the course of his journey to the Arctic Ocean Hearne came upon a forlorn young woman under such circumstances that I must be excused for reproducing his account of the occurrence almost in its entirety. Here it is in his own words.

### Necessity the Mother of Invention.

"On the eleventh of January [1772], as some of my companions were hunting, they saw the track of a strange snow-shoe, which they followed; and at a considerable distance came to a little hut, where they discovered a young woman sitting alone. As they found that she understood their language, they brought her with them to the tents. On examination, she proved to be one of the Western Dogribbed Indians, who had been taken prisoner by the Athapuscow Indians in the summer of one thousand seven hundred and seventy; and in the following summer, when the Indians that took her prisoner were near this part, she had eloped from them, with an intent to return to her own country; but the distance being so great, and having after she was taken prisoner, been carried in a canoe the whole way, the turnings and windings of the rivers and lakes were so numerous, that she forgot the track; so she built the hut in which we found her, to protect her from the weather during the winter, and here she had resided from the first setting in of the fall.

"From her account of the moons passed since her elopement, it appeared that she had been near seven months without seeing a human face; during all which time she had supported herself very well by snaring partridges, rabbits, and squirrels; she had also killed two or three beaver, and some porcupines. That she did not seem to have been in want is evident, as she had a small stock of provisions by her when she was discovered; and was in good health and condition, and I think one of the finest women, of a real Indian, that I have seen in any part of North America.

"The methods practised by this poor creature to procure a livelihood were truly admirable, and are great proofs that necessity is the real mother of invention. When the few deer-sinews that she had an opportunity of taking with her were all expended in making snares, and sewing her clothing, she had nothing to supply their place but the sinews of the rabbit legs and feet; these she twisted together for that purpose with great dexterity and success. The rabbits, etc., which she caught in those snares, not only furnished her

with a comfortable subsistence, but of the skins she made a suit of neat and warm clothing for the winter. It is scarcely possible to conceive that a person in her forlorn situation could be so composed as to be capable of contriving or executing any thing that was not absolutely necessary to her existence; but there were sufficient proofs that she had extended her care much farther, as all her clothing, beside being calculated for real service, shewed great taste, and exhibited no little variety of ornament. The materials, though rude, were very curiously wrought, and so judiciously placed, as to make the whole of her garb have a very pleasing, though rather romantic appearance.

"Her leisure hours from hunting had been employed in twisting the inner rind or bark of willows into small lines, like net-twine, of which she had some hundred fathoms by her; with this she intended to make a fishing-net as soon as the spring advanced . . .

"Five or six inches of an iron hoop, made into a knife, and the shank of an arrow-head of iron, which served her as an awl, were all the metals this poor woman had with her when she eloped; and with these implements she had made herself complete snow-shoes, and several other useful articles"<sup>1</sup>.

Now that we are fairly well initiated into the secrets of human ingenuity within the hyperborean wastes of America, we may review the various sources of subsistence in connection wherewith this same ingenuity displays itself.

### **Deer the Staple Food of the Northeastern Dénés.**

And first as to the reindeer, or Barren Ground cariboo (*Rangifer groenlandicus*). Independently of the multifarious uses to which its whole anatomy is put, and considered solely as an article of food, it is undoubtedly to the majority of the northern Dénés, east of the Rocky Mountains, what wheat is to the European, rice to the Asiatic, cocoa-nut to the South Pacific islander, seal to the Eskimo, salmon to the native of northwestern America, and what buffalo was formerly to the Plains Indian. It furnishes him with his staple food and the material of most of his household impedimenta. For that reason it deserves more than a passing mention.

Its range is from 60° N. lat. to the Arctic Ocean, including the adjacent islands in the latter, and from Hudson Bay to the Mackenzie River, though only straggling numbers ever go west of Coppermine or Great Bear Lake. Within this area lie the otherwise resourceless regions known as the Canadian Barren Grounds, immense steppes which would certainly prove the death of the white man rash enough to venture through them, but which a kind Providence has converted into what might be called the larder of the Déné huntsman. There, moving masses of reindeer subsist on a species of lichen named after them *L. rangeriferinus*, almost the only representative of the vegetable kingdom which nature does not grudge that unfruitful soil,

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<sup>1</sup> "A Journey from Prince of Wales' Fort", pp. 262—64.

The American reindeer is characterized by two particularities: its migratory habits and its gregariousness. In midsummer the cows return from the Arctic Ocean to meet the bulls in the Barren Grounds, and they are then also joined by other caravans from the westward, when their herds become simply enormous. Tyrrell and Pike, during their respective journeys to that land of desolation, saw herds of them that should have been counted by the thousand.

It is at this time of the year that they fall victims to the avidity of the Dénés. But their stay is short, their passage rapid, and once gone they may not be seen again for a whole year.

C. Whitney estimates the average weight of the full grown Barren Ground cariboo or reindeer bull at something between 150 and 200 pounds, whereas the woodland or common cariboo probably averages 100 pounds more. According to the same authority, the woodland cariboo (*Rangifer caribou*, *Linn.*) is much darker in colour, especially in the markings on the neck and belly, and its antlers are shorter, heavier and with larger palmations. Generally speaking, they range between the 50th and the 67th degrees of latitude on either side of the Rocky Mountains. Though gregarious to a degree and also more or less migratory, they are never found in anything like the immense herds of their Barren Grounds cousins. In fact they seldom go more than 30 or 40 together. Within British Columbia and Alaska the mountains, generally above the timber limits, are their favourite haunts.

Another and even larger kind of deer which often contributes towards the sustenance of the northern Déné is the moose (*Alces americanus*). Mr. James Lockhart reports having seen on Peel River and at Fort Yukon two monstrous specimens whose meat alone weighed over 1000 pounds<sup>1</sup>. These animals are not gregarious as the two species of cariboo just mentioned, and they are liable to be found anywhere within that area. Roderick Macfarlane observed tracks of some near Wilmot Horton River, in the Barren Grounds, by about latitude 69° N. and longitude 126° 30' W.<sup>2</sup>. Nay, Sir Robert McClure saw as far north as 71° lat. three animals which he firmly believed to be moose. Of late they have become quite plentiful in the country of the western Nahanni, and correspondingly scarce east of the Rockies, especially along the Athabasca, Peace and lower Liard.

The moose is economically speaking a most valuable animal to the Dénés, as the large size and thickness of its skin allow of its being used to greater advantage in the preparation of tents or lodges, carrioles or toboggans, shirts, tunics and trousers. Some skins are also cut up for pack cords and others turned into parchment for the manufacture of large travelling bags or used in lieu of window panes.

<sup>1</sup> Proc. U. S. National Museum, vol. XIII, p. 307.

<sup>2</sup> "Notes on Mammals", by Rod. Macfarlane, *ubi suprà*, vol. XXIII, p. 667.

Within central and western British Columbia a smaller representative of the deer family, the mule deer (*Cariacus macrotis*), has also its economic importance, of which, however, the Chilcotins are almost the only beneficiaries. On their bunch-grass covered plateaus these are very numerous, though, within the last fifteen years, they seem to have constantly tended northwards. When I first went to Stuart Lake, in the heart of the Carrier country (1885), they were hardly known there. Since, their numbers have constantly, if slowly, increased. They are now found as far as twenty miles north of the south end of Babine Lake. They were such a novelty there that my Babine companions who first saw a small herd of five did not know to what king of game they belonged.

### Other Species of Game.

The above are the principal venison game, in fact the alimentary mainstay of the modern Déné of the north. But his forefathers had two other large mammals which are now practically, if not totally, extinct within his matrimonial domains. These are the buffalo and the elk. The latter (*Cervus canadensis*) has been declared to be none other than moose, an evident mistake. Mr. Malcolm McLeod is certainly astray when he claims<sup>1</sup> that Mackenzie confounds both animals in his journal. The moose and the elk are two very distinct animals. The former (*tæni* in Carrier) is still to be found in the territory of the western Dénés, while the latter (*yeyih* in the same dialect) was either seen or heard of west of the Rocky Mountains by the oldest extant aborigines. That this kind of deer did really exist at one time within reach of their arrows is shown by the fact that, when they first saw a horse, they called it a domestic elk (*yeyih-ti*, elk-dog), a name it has retained to this day.

As to the buffalo (*Bos americanus*), that quondam king of the plains, of which science now deplores the almost complete extermination, it is too well known to require a description. To us the most remarkable peculiarity in connection therewith is the fact that, of all the game animals so far mentioned, it was the only one which was common to the habitats of both northern and southern Dénés. As early as 1710 the English Captain Woodes Rogers, writing of New Mexico and its aborigines, says that "leurs bœufs et leurs vaches sont très gros, avec de petites cornes, le poil presque comme de la laine, long devant et court derrière, un (*sic*) bosse sur le dos, de grandes barbes comme les chèvres et les jambes de devant très courtes. Quoique très laids de figure, leur force les en dédommage; et ils sont la principale richesse des habitants, qui se nourrissent de leur chair, font de leur peau des habits et des toits pour leurs maisons; filent leur bourre; font des cordes d'arc avec leurs nerfs, divers ustensiles de leurs os et des trompettes de leurs cornes<sup>2</sup>."

<sup>1</sup> "Peace River", p. 79.

<sup>2</sup> *Histoire des Découvertes faites par les Européens*, vol. X, pp. 289—90.

Its economic importance was not so marked among the northern Dénés, and only a few stragglers ever crossed the Rocky Mountains to the westward. Hearne describes it as very plentiful around Lake Athabasca in 1772, and in 1789 Mackenzie wrote that on both sides of the Horn Mountain, by about 62° N. lat., "there are very extensive plains which abound in buffaloes and moose deer<sup>1</sup>." Nay, J. B. Tyrrell expressly states that some used to stay as far north along the Mackenzie River as lat. 64°<sup>2</sup>.

Everybody is familiar with the tremendously large number of their herds, when the great American prairies literally trembled under the thumping of their hoofs and the whole horizon seemed to be obscured by their mane encompassed heads and humps. In January 1821, the Rev. J. West had at one time not less than 10,000 in his sight between Qu'Appelle and the Red River, and he had not been on the look-out for any<sup>3</sup>. But such was the telling effect of fire-arms on their numbers that, as early as 1858, Father De Smet wrote that, though not yet extinct in Kansas, they were becoming quite rare across the plains of that State<sup>4</sup>. All naturalists know the rest. Needless to insist on the now practically total extinction of that noble animal. Our illustration representing a corner of the Canadian prairies strewn with their bones<sup>5</sup> will also tell of the effectiveness of native ingenuity in this connection.

Some sort of a survivor is now occasionally found in the woodland buffalo or bison (*Bison athabascae*, Rhoads), a few bands of which live in secluded spots within the country bounded by the Peace, Slave and Buffalo Rivers. C. Whitney estimates their present numbers at between 150 and 300 head<sup>6</sup>. In its retirement this buffalo has grown more rounded in form than its plain congener, and, as if to suit the special climatic conditions of its present existence, a kind Providence has provided it with a thicker and darker robe.

### **Smaller Game.**

But we must not tarry too long on the buffalo considered as a factor in the economics of the Dénés. It is but fair to remark that it never attained in their estimation half the importance acquired by the reindeer. We have now hardly space left us to more than enumerate the minor specimens of venison game, whence our aborigines derived their food and raiment, and which they still hunt with the same perseverance to this day.

These are: the common mountain sheep (*Ovis montana*, Cuv.), Dall's mountain sheep (*O. Dallii*, Nelson), the mountain goat (*Capra americana*,

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 222.

<sup>2</sup> "Catalogue of the Mammalia of Canada". Proc. Can. Inst., vol. VI, p. 70.

<sup>3</sup> "The Substance of a Journal", p. 41.

<sup>4</sup> "New Indian Sketches", p. 76.

<sup>5</sup> See chapter on Hunting.

<sup>6</sup> "On Snow-Shoes to the Barren Grounds", p. 117. London, 1896. That author opines for the first number, a circumstance which shows the extreme scarcity of that animal.

Rich.), and the humbler but not less useful hoary marmot (*Arctomys caligatus*), all of which are exclusively mountain animals, and one, *Ovis Dallii*, is, I think, found exclusively on the spurs of the Rocky Mountains immediately to the west of the lower Mackenzie. None of them appear east of the Rockies. To these we might add the true bighorn (*Ovis canadensis*, Shaw), which is said to exist in the ranges of the south, but of which I have no personal knowledge. Both the common or American mountain sheep and the mountain goat inhabit fastnesses well within British Columbia and Alaska; but, with the exception of the marmot, which is gregarious though sedentary, all the mountain game are solitary in their habits, and their haunts are usually difficult of access.

For that reason their economic importance is not to be compared with that of even such a lowly animal as the American hare (*Lepus americanus*), commonly called rabbit in the north. Its very ubiquitousness renders it a valuable alimentary article, though, living mostly on the bark of saplings generally more or less resinous, its flesh is much inferior to that of the European hare. It is also much smaller, and, as is well known, though naturally gray in colour, it turns to a perfect white on the approach of winter, and so remains till the early spring.

Hare is the game of the poor, of the orphan and the widow, inasmuch as the use of fire-arms or even of the bow and arrows is by no means necessary to secure it. Every morning of the winter months, women and children visit their rabbit snares, as they do during the fair season with regard to their fish-nets. Rather scarce in the beginning, its numbers regularly increase until the seventh year, when they are to be seen everywhere. Then they disappear of a sudden, migrating for the lack of shrubs to gnaw, according to some, but more probably stricken by some sort of epidemic, as not a few of their remains are then to be found in the woods.

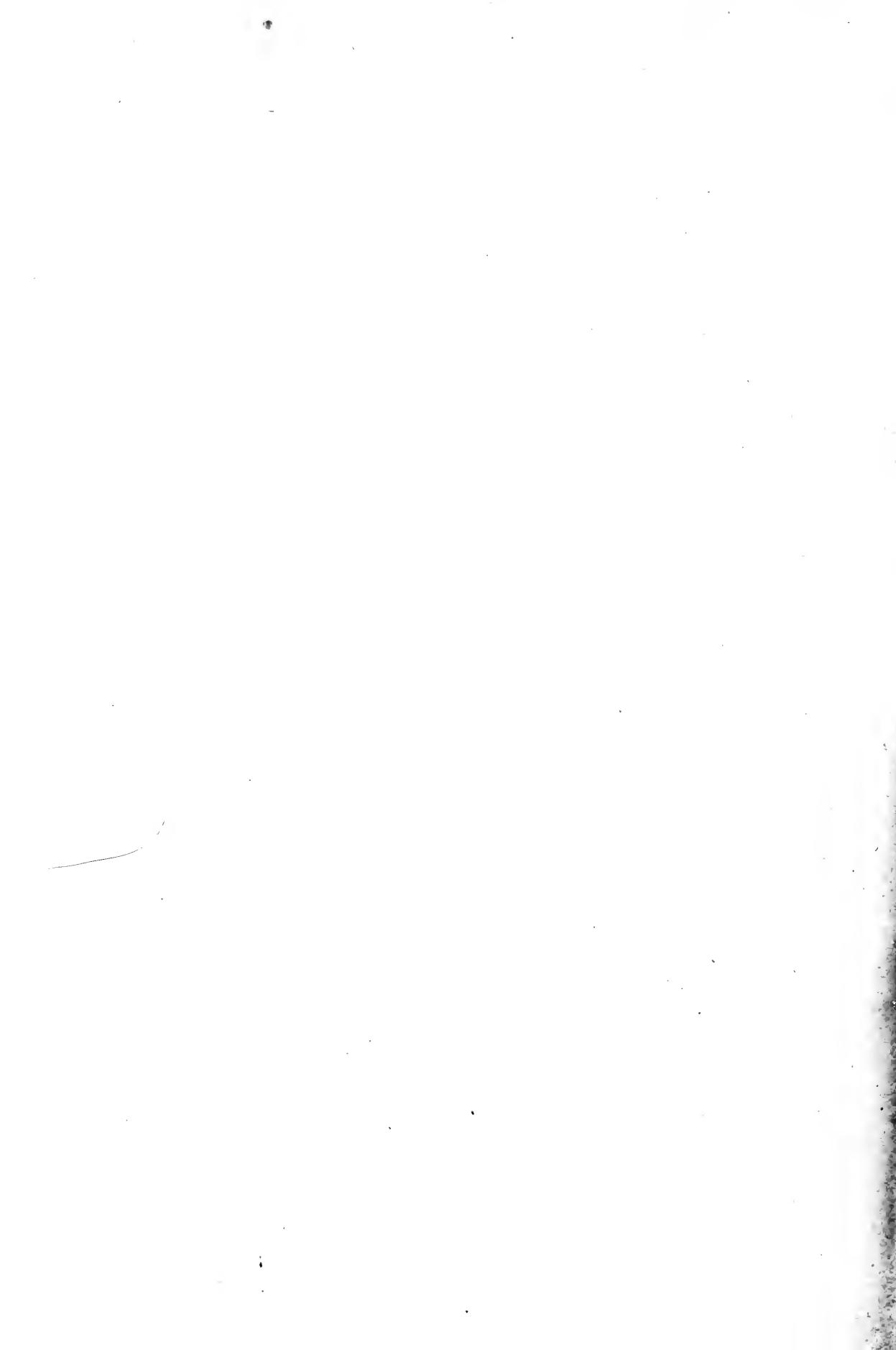
Nor should we forget the great importance which the hoary marmot has in the north, owing to the usefulness of its skin, which goes to make travelling robes for the winter toboggans, as well as cloaks and other articles of dress. Its congener, the ground-hog (*A. monax*, Linn.), is far less abundant. The porcupine (*Erethizon dorsatus*), which was formerly sought chiefly for the sake of its quills, is now valued only for the food it yields. This is quite appreciated by the native palate; but my own experience would lead me to remark that, when improperly prepared, the flesh of few animals has such a disagreeable taste.

### The Musk-Ox.

Well cooked or not, the flesh of the musk-ox can hardly ever tempt the Epicurean. The musk-ox is the monarch of part of the frigid zone of North America, remarkable alike for its zoological peculiarities and for the limited perimeter of its habitat. Its scientific name, *Ovibos moschatus*, stamps it as a sort of connecting link between the ox and the sheep. It has the feet and



Camp of Hunters on the Shore of the Mackenzie.



head of the former and the teeth and gait of the latter. On the other hand, few animals have such a restricted habitat. It ranges from the 65th. degree of latitude north to the Arctic Ocean, and from Hudson Bay in the east to the Coppermine River in the west. Outside of this extreme northeastern portion of the new continent, it is to be found nowhere else in the world, except perhaps in Grinnell Land and Northern Greenland. Whitney is responsible for this qualification. But Richardson writes that "it does not exist in Greenland"<sup>1</sup>, though a little further on he admits having "read somewhere of a skull having been found" there<sup>2</sup>. The latter author states also that "one . . . was procured by Captain Beachey (*sic* for Beechey), from that very curious deposit of bones in the frozen cliffs of Escholtz Bay of Beering's Straits." Richardson does not give his authority for this statement. By scanning over Beechey's Journal, especially those passages of it that mention Escholtz Bay — as he spells the name himself — I fail to find any confirmation of the same. Where the mariner records his arrival at that spot, he gives indeed a description of the geological formation and his eolithic finds that tallies with that referred to by Richardson; but the bones discovered there were those of the elephant, not of the musk-ox<sup>3</sup>. The latter animal has long ceased to go even as far west as Mackenzie River.

Warburton Pike, who is well known for his love of sport under the most awkward circumstances, thus describes their habitat: "There is nothing striking or grand in the scenery, no big mountains or waterfalls, but a monotonous snow-covered waste, without tree or scrub, rarely trodden by the foot of the wandering Indian. A deathly stillness hangs over all, and the oppressive loneliness weighs upon the spectator till he is glad to shout aloud to break the awful spell of solitude. Such is the land of the musk-ox in snow-time; here this strange animal finds abundance of its favourite lichens, and defies the cold that has driven every other living thing to the woods for shelter"<sup>4</sup>.

The musk-ox robes I have seen were of a dark brown with fine fleecy under-hair, and as to size the natives estimate the flesh of a mature cow as the equivalent of about three reindeer. The bull might be some 200 pounds heavier<sup>5</sup>. They travel in herds of ten to twenty-five<sup>6</sup>, and, if attacked by dogs, they invariably form a circle with calves inside, rumps together and heads facing the enemy. Whitney, who writes after personal experience, is positive on this point, and Richardson corroborates his assertions. But Pike seems no

<sup>1</sup> "Arctic Searching Expedition", vol. I, p. 322.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 325.

<sup>3</sup> "Narrative of a Voyage to the Pacific", vol. I, p. 352.

<sup>4</sup> "The Barren Grounds of Canada", p. 107. London, 1892.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. "On Snow-Shoes to the Barren Grounds", p. 224. My illustration of the musk-ox is from a photograph of an actual specimen.

<sup>6</sup> "W. Pike says he once saw a herd fully 100 head strong (*Op. cit.*, p. 103).

less certain that on two occasions those he saw thus attacked stood in a confused mass, shifting their positions to make an occasional lunge at a too impetuous dog.

Despite the general belief of the Indians, Whitney doubts that a musk-ox ever charges man, and Pike covertly sneers at what he evidently deems the unfounded fears of his native companions. My own experience in analogous fields is that the Indians are past masters in the art of reading nature's book, whether its subject be the animate or the inanimate kingdom. In his "Narrative of a Second Voyage in Search of a North-West Passage", Sir John Ross depicts a musk-ox charging him, and, in explanation, he writes in his text that the animal "made a sudden dart at us . . . We avoided the attack, by dodging behind a large stone which was luckily near us; on which, rushing with all its force, it struck its head so violently, that it fell to the ground with such a crash that the hard ground around us fairly echoed to the sound"<sup>1</sup>. Which goes to prove that, not only does the musk-ox know how to charge, but there is even considerably of the ram instinct in him. It is not therefore without reason that Richardson calls it a "redoubtable animal"<sup>2</sup>.

### Feathered Game.

Feathered game is fairly plentiful in the north and at times exceedingly abundant. Prominent among the permanent class are at least four kinds of grouse, partridges or chickens, and two species of ptarmigans, mountain birds whose plumage, naturally gray with white spots, turns entirely white in winter. As I am not writing a catalogue of the pennated fauna of North America, I must be excused from entering into more details, or even simply enumerating the various species of wild fowls which contribute towards the sustenance of the Déné.

In the south the Navahoes and the Apaches have the wild turkey (*Meleagris americana*), which they have known for centuries and which the former even claim to have formerly kept in a semi-domesticated state, though they now abstain from eating its flesh<sup>3</sup>. According to Washington Matthews they extend that sort of taboo to all aquatic birds, such as geese or ducks<sup>4</sup>.

Their northern kinsmen are not so exclusive. Indeed they cannot afford to be so, especially as water-fowl swarm in their country at a time when other alimentary resources fail them. Furthermore, owing to their migratory habits, these birds stay seldom more than a month in any place, except north of the 57th. degree of N. latitude, in the chosen spots where they have their chief breeding grounds. Among these are considerably more than a dozen species

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 350.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 323.

<sup>3</sup> "Navaho Legends", p. 244.

<sup>4</sup> "Ichthyophobia", in *Journal of Amer. Folk-Lore*, p. 1906.

of ducks, some of which are represented by immense numbers. In fact, the accompanying illustration does not begin to give an idea of the flocks of water-fowl which I have often raised, especially along the outlet of Stuart Lake. The sky in front of me was then literally darkened by their fleeing swarms.

To the wild ducks must be added eight kinds of geese or brants, without counting the beautiful emperor goose of Alaska, two species of swans with rather few representatives, two cranes, one of which is usually found in large flocks, etc. Yet the economic importance of these various aquatic birds pales, among the Carriers, before that of a single species it remains with me to name. Three sorts of grebes visit in the early spring the half frozen lakes of the western Dénés; but one, *Aechmorphosus occidentalis*, though by no means delicate as an article of diet, appears in such vast numbers and is so easily secured that it forms a most valuable addition to the northlander's larder. For a period of a fortnight or so, its legions cover the lower end of his lakes but recently imprisoned under a coat of ice.

And then the Dénés have fish, which, in the north especially west of the Rocky Mountains, is quite an important item in their daily menu, without mentioning such game as bears and beavers which are sought as much for the sake of their fur as on account of their flesh. The former we shall detail when we come to treat of fishing; the latter shall be further described in our chapter on hunting.

### Famine.

It would seem from the foregoing that the northern Dénés are not so badly off as regards economic resources, and, conversely, that our opening sentence as to their life being a constant struggle with nature was hardly opposite. And yet if there is in the world a land where wretchedness and starvation usually reign supreme, it is undoubtedly the northern territory of the race under study. Of course, much of their misery could be laid at the doors of their own improvidence, which in some cases is really phenomenal. But this is shared, at least to some extent, by all the aboriginal nations of America, some of which were as familiar with affluence as with want. The truth is that, as the northern Dénés derive absolutely no benefit from the soil, all their alimentary resources are more or less aleatory and uncertain. Abundant in the extreme for a few days, they may afterwards fail for months, yea, almost for years.

Were not these sad conditions so well known through the missionaries in their midst, we could still point to the unvarying statements of all the explorers who ever wrote of their country. The journal of any one would bear me out in my assertion. I take at random that of Captain Back, from which I cull a few facts in corroboration of the same.

On the 29th. of September 1833, he chronicles the return of a canoe with "not a good load of meat as [he] had hoped, but with a poor old

woman . . . rendered absolutely frightful by famine and disease"<sup>1</sup>, who dies soon after of the effects of previous starvation. On the next page of his book he has the following entry: "October. Starving Indians continued to arrive from every point of the compass, declaring that the animals had left the Barren Lands where they had hitherto been accustomed to feed at this season; and that the calamity was not confined to the Yellow Knives, but that the Chipewyans also were as forlorn and destitute as themselves." The third page tells of the murder of the commander of a trading fort and of his interpreter, in revenge for the refusal of the former to succour starving Indians who "requested a small proportion of his well-stocked store, to enable them to recruit their strength for fresh efforts in the chase."

Always in the same chapter he mentions that, in spite of the professional hunters in his employ, his "supplies again failed, distress was prevalent, and the din and screeching of women and children plainly indicated the acuteness of their suffering"<sup>2</sup>. Then he records the arrival of four new Indians with the usual remark that "they came for food".

But this is nothing to the dismal events related but one page further. Capt. Back writes: "To the westward . . . forty of the choicest hunters among the Chipewyans had been destroyed by actual famine; many others had not yet been heard of; and the scattered survivors, from the rigours of the climate and the difficulty of procuring a single animal, had experienced the severest hardships which even their hardy natures were capable of sustaining"<sup>3</sup>.

And lest I should be accused of purposely choosing the gloomiest author, I put Back's volume aside and replace it by one wherein the optimistic note is preponderant. In his valuable work on the Tuski of Asia and the natives of Arctic America, Lieut. W. H. Hooper says that, even at Fort Good Hope the Hudson's Bay Company's people "were without subsistence and the Indians dying in crowds. The gentleman in charge of the station at that time heard one night the blows of the axe in lodges near the Fort, by which the weaker were killed to be devoured. The express-men . . . were met by a party of starving Indians, who stole upon them at night, murdered and ate them and their provisions, and, as report goes, were in their turn slaughtered and devoured"<sup>4</sup>."

No wonder, then, if even people of our blood under such distressing circumstances render themselves guilty of acts of which they blush, in spite of the loud calls of the self-preservation instinct which prompts them. In October 1851, there were at a certain post on the upper Yukon seven men with two officers who were reduced to live on the skin of moose, reindeer,

<sup>1</sup> "Narrative of the Arctic Land Expedition to the Mouth of the Great Fish River", p. 193.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 207.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 209.

<sup>4</sup> "Ten Months in the Tents of the Tuski", p. 304.

bear and beaver, "half a moose skin being the allowance for six men for one day<sup>1</sup>." During the following summer one of the officers with two white employees were again confronted by famine. "Having eaten up everything to the very pack or bale cords made of green hide, leather and even their mocassins, they began in the middle of December to singe and eat the remaining furs<sup>2</sup>." The gentleman, after an absence of some time, having unexpectedly returned with a raven he had chanced to kill for his men, was horrified to find one of them missing and, on further examination, his liver boiling in the kettle of his companion!

### Cannibalism.

After reading the foregoing who will be surprised to be told that our northern Dénés were but lately cannibals? Nothing else could be expected of untutored savages under the circumstances. Nay, I am myself familiar with a certain spot along the upper Fraser where, in 1862, of three shipwrecked white men one killed and ate the weaker member of the band in company with the other survivor, only to be afterwards similarly treated by the remaining cannibal, who later on did not the less fall a victim to hunger<sup>3</sup>.

Let me hasten to remark in palliation of the crime, if palliation be possible, that, as a rule, only the direst straits and the irresistible desire to prolong their lives at the expense of others will lead our Indians to such extremities. However, the Slaves, the Dog-Ribs and the Hares have a specially bad reputation in this respect. John McLean relates the case of a member of the first tribe who, having first destroyed his wife, packed up her remains as so much provision for his journey, helping himself regularly to part of them as he went along. The supply proving insufficient, one of the children was next sacrificed, and when the cannibal was finally left by the party he was accompanying, only one child remained, a boy of seven or eight years, whom he was afterwards found devouring at a moment when assistance was being brought him<sup>4</sup>.

Lieut. Hooper mentions another Indian, apparently of the same tribe, who had eaten up eleven or thirteen persons, among whom were his own parents, one wife and the children of two<sup>5</sup>. Long after, Fr. Petitot knew himself another who had lived on the flesh of eleven individuals<sup>6</sup>. Another still, whose trading post was Fort Simpson on the Mackenzie, was reported to have

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 329.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 330.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. "History of the Northern Interior of B. C.", p. 301 of 3rd. ed.

<sup>4</sup> "Notes of a Twenty-Five Years' Service", vol. II, p. 248.

<sup>5</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 303.

<sup>6</sup> *Missions des O. M. I.*

assisted in the consumption of eighteen Indians during periods of starvation, and he was said to prefer human flesh to any other<sup>1</sup>.

This is unfortunately but too often the case: the aborigine who becomes a cannibal out of sheer necessity acquires an unwholesome taste for his new food. Hence, once known as such, his life is generally unsafe, even among his countrymen, who value their own lives above that of a man-eater. A sly bullet or an arrow from behind, if not during the dark hours of sleep, usually prevents him from further gratifying his unholy appetite.

Such unfortunate cases seem to have been less common west of the Rocky Mountains, probably because the staple food, dried salmon, being there of a less precarious character, occasions for the manifestations of the same were correspondingly scarcer. Hooper even relates that a Beaver Indian happening to visit Fort Dunvegan on Peace River in the spring of 1850, denied himself and others the ordinary sign of salutation and amity because he confessed having eaten man's flesh. He even asserted that the thought of his horrible deed would soon kill him. As a matter of fact his death took place shortly after. Hooper avers that neither the Slaves, nor the Dog-Ribs were so scrupulous. Nor are, according to Th. Simpson, those Mountain Indians to whom a somewhat lengthy reference has been made in the course of our second chapter. If his Dog-Rib informants were not unduly crediting others with their own foible, that tribe was originally composed of almost regular cannibals who, immediately on any scarcity of food arising, would cast lots for victims. So claimed an old man who, while yet a stripling, fled from the tribe and joined himself to the Dog-Ribs in consequence of his finding his mother, on his return from a successful day's hunting, busy roasting the body of her own child, his youngest brother<sup>2</sup>.

### Treatment of the Weak.

A point in connection wherewith the conscience of no tribe was ever weighed down with any scruple is the treatment meted out to the weak, the old and the infirm. The orphan, the widow and the aged form categories of beings who, among the primitive Dénés, were regarded as possessing hardly any of those rights which are now considered as inherent to humanity. The orphan became not only the factotum, but the regular slave of his new masters, that is, such of even his own relations as may have adopted him. Ill-treated, ill-fed, half-clad and ever urged to greater exertion, though he may have been working himself to death, such was invariably his lot. His very name is to this day an offensive epithet.

As to the widow, we will see in its proper place that her fate was even worse.

<sup>1</sup> "Ten Months", p. 405.

<sup>2</sup> "Narrative of the Discoveries", p. 188, footnote.

There now remain the old and the infirm. No respect was ever paid to age as such. On they contray, the mere mention of gray hair was enough to silence any elderly man who may have had the presumption to proffer advice to a younger generation. "Sit down, old man: your hair is gray", is the usual form assumed by the rebuke. It is equivalent to: you have lived; your time is past. Even among the Hupas of northern California, a tribe of Indians somewhat more humane because less savage, conditions in this respect were not any more satisfactory, according to H. L. Knight, an attorney-at-law who wrote in 1871 of his visit to their Reservation: "The oldest men, or stout middle-aged fathers of families, were spoken to just as children or slaves<sup>1</sup>."

We have already seen that the Dénés age incomparably more slowly than the whites. This is specially true of the men; but we should add that when they do age, they generally become the very picture of wretchedness, a heap of wrinkles without expression or meaning, especially in the case of the women. The old Sarcee squaw I herewith introduce to my readers is but a fair specimen of that class. The Indians realize themselves the ludicrous appearance of such wrecks, and, as their mental faculties seem to decay at least in the same proportion as their physique, the able-bodied members of the tribes have some excuse for showing them but scant consideration.

Shall I, with some authors, extend that palliative even to the abandoning of the same to certain death in times of penury? We read that, among the Romans of old, when a guilty Vestal was left to die as a punishment for her fall from virginity, lest the stain of actual murder should be incurred, a couch, a lamp and a little food were left by her, though she was buried alive. When in times of famine or simply in the course of their great hunting expeditions, the northern Dénés were burdened with relatives broken with years and infirmities, they left them some fire and water, with a little meat and an axe, to which a pipeful of tobacco was sometimes generously added, and then went their way never looking back at the victim of their inhumanity.

Instead of enlarging on this subject and quoting many instances when even these last tokens of feeling were not bestowed on abandoned relatives, I prefer to let Hearne give the last stroke to this part of the picture I am endeavouring to sketch of the Déné sociology. "Old age", he writes, is the greatest calamity that can befall a Northern Indian; for when he is past labour, he is neglected, and treated with great disrespect, even by his own children. They not only serve him last at meals, but generally give him the coarsest and worst of the victuals: and such of the skins as they do not chuse to wear, are made up in the clumsiest manner into clothing for their aged parents; who, as they had, in all probability, treated their fathers and mothers with the same neglect, in their turns, submitted patiently to their lot, even

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<sup>1</sup> Report of the Indian Commissioner, 1871, p. 158.

without a murmur, knowing it to be the common misfortune attendant an old age; so that they may be said to wait patiently for the melancholy hour when, being no longer capable of walking, they are to be left alone, to starve and perish for want. This, however, shocking and unnatural as it may appear, is nevertheless so common, that, among those people, one half at least of the aged persons of both sexes absolutely die in this miserable condition”<sup>1</sup>.

When thus abandoned, the unfortunates sometimes beg themselves to be speedily delivered of their misery by their own children. J. West records the case of an old woman who prevailed upon her son to shoot her through the head<sup>2</sup>, much in the same way as the Tuskis of Asia deem it quite natural, yea, considerate, for a dutiful son to put an end to his old mother’s existence, instead of letting her cumber the earth with her useless presence and burden her relatives with her unceasing groans<sup>3</sup>.

### Brighter Conditions in the South.

In the less melancholy south better economic conditions prevail because of a more satisfactory climate. Besides elk and deer, which were plentiful in the original haunts of the Hupas, these aborigines have salmon and other fish, without mentioning acorns, which may be said to constitute their staff of life. As to the southern Dénés proper, I mean the Navahoes and the Apaches, they were for a long time regular parasites, living at the expense of their neighbours, the Pueblo Indians and the Mexican settlers. Instead of looking to the woods or the barren grounds for means of subsistence on which they could not always depend, they thought it a more sensible, if less honest, policy, despite the danger thereby incurred, to capture from the strangers domestic animals which they were always sure to find in time of need. In this respect both Apaches and Navahoes were, to a late date, on the same footing: marauders and highway robbers on a large scale.

Late in 1540, a Spanish army hailing from Compostella reached New Mexico with 5000 sheep and 150 cows, and it seems almost certain that the Navahoes obtained soon after 1542 their first share in the boon thus brought to that part of the New World. Since that time, thousands of sheep, goats and horses were appropriated by the same tribe, which in course of time, have increased to such an extent that from a nomadic raider the Navaho has perforce become a peaceful shepherd.

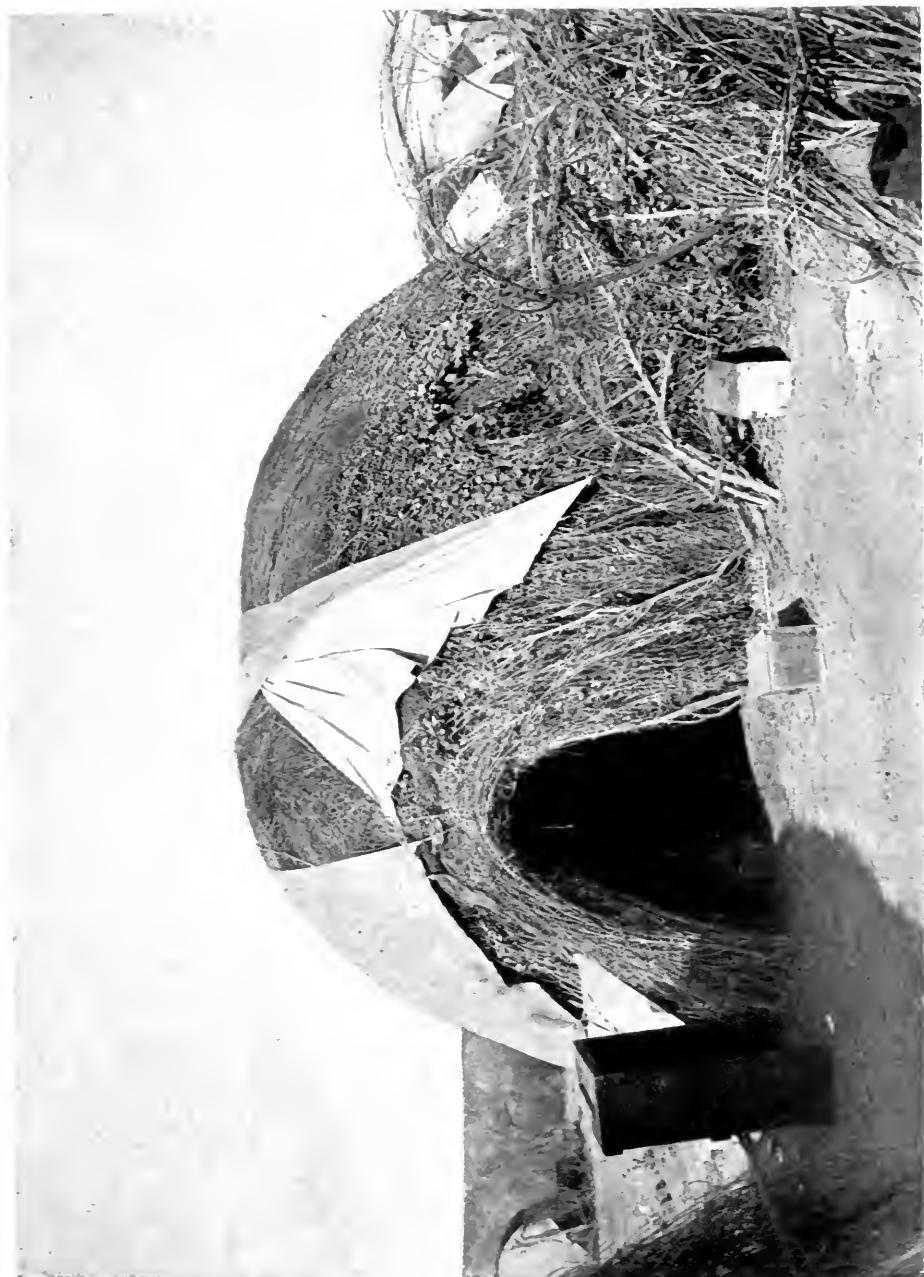
His lands are in the main quite high — from 6,000 to 8,000 feet above sea level — and generally arid, with no permanent rivers, save the San Juan and the Little Colorado, the other streams being merely water-courses which remain dry the greater part of the year, that is, outside of the spring season

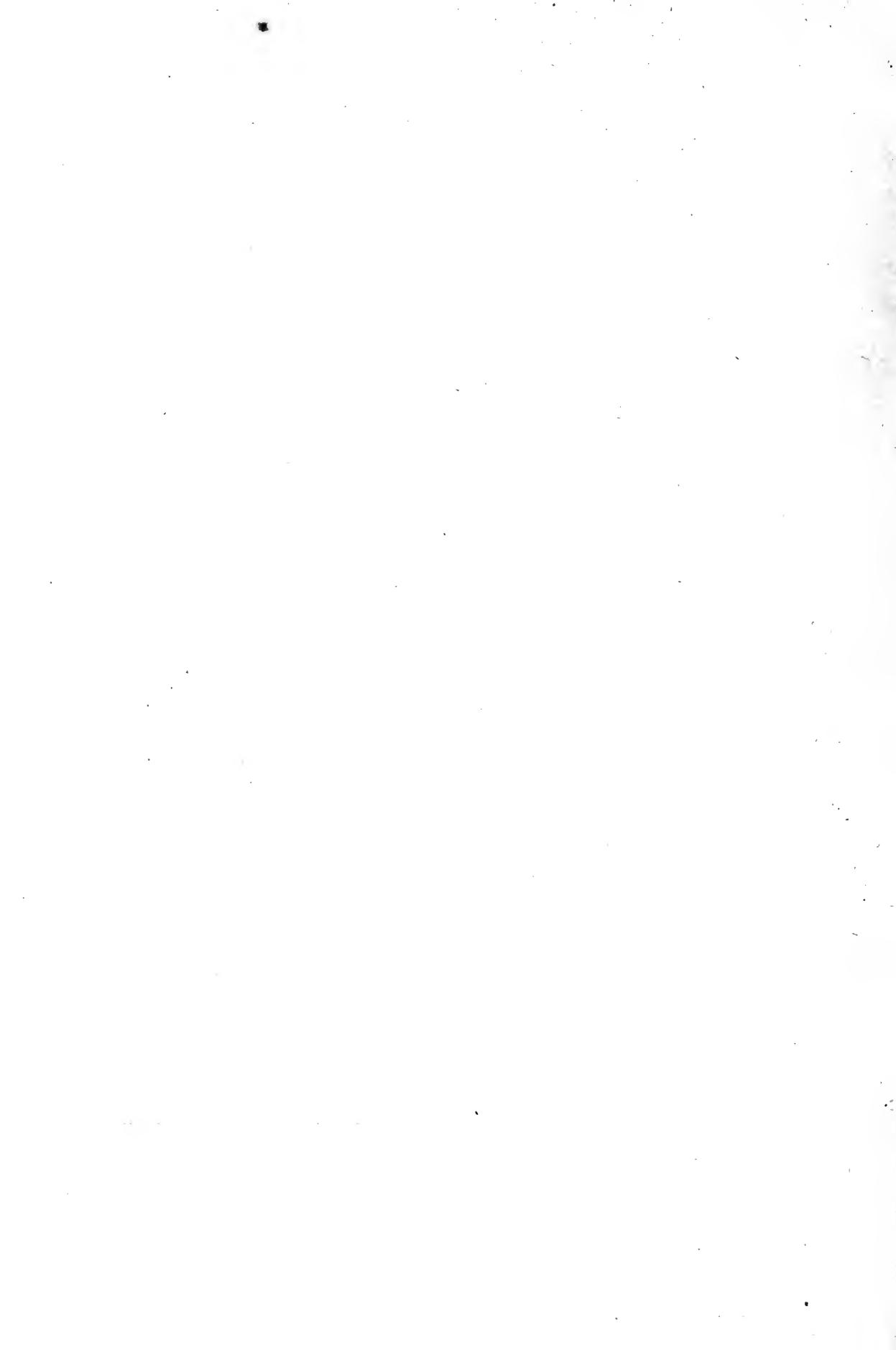
<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 345—46.

<sup>2</sup> “The Substance of a Journal”, p. 125.

<sup>3</sup> “Ten Months among the Tents of the Tuski”, p. 188—89.

**Apache Home** (With Chest for Cooking Utensils).





and the few days that follow a heavy rain fall. Hence it is hardly adapted to agriculture. Yet in such places as are favoured with a constant supply of water the Navahoes manage to raise corn, beans, wheat, melons, potatoes, etc., while keeping up their pastoral life which has now replaced that of the warrior and of the raider.

With them sheep are to-day what reindeer is to their less fortunate kinsmen who roam to the west of Hudson Bay. Almost every Navaho family possesses a flock of sheep and goats numbering anything between a hundred and two thousand head. Herds of cattle, horses and other large domestic animals are also common throughout their country. The following list of the stock now owned by the Navahoes will tell of economic conditions which are not unsatisfactory, especially if we compare them with the pitiful destitution generally prevalent among the northern Dénés.

Déné Bands	Horses, Mules and Burros	Cattle	Sheep	Goats
Navaho Reservation . . .	45.000	7.000	425.000	75.000
Western Navahoes . . .	5.200	2.000	11.500	6.000
Nav. Extension . . . .	426	100	10.000	2.000
New Mexico Navahoes .	1.032	150	2.000	500
San Juan Nav . . . .	15.000	3.000	200.000	25.000
Totals	66.658	12.250	648.500	108.500

Nay, even the unredeemed Apaches have now their little farms, by the side of which they find room for the following live stock:

Déné Bands	Horses, Mules and Burros	Cattle	Sheep	Goats
White Mountain . . . .	5.821	1504	674	9
San Carlos . . . . .	2.245	280	—	—
Jicarilla . . . . .	2.662	25	2000	2000
Mescalero . . . . .	880	—	6500	1750
Totals	11.608	1809	9174	3759

Even these figures, however, betray a significant disparity in the number of those animals the possession of which is essential to the welfare of the nomad and those which predicate a pastoral, and therefore more sedentary, mode of life. Thus the Apaches have, in proportion to their entire stock, nine and a half times more horses and mules than the Navahoes. This only datum is of itself an excellent gauge of the present condition of the two tribes themselves.

## CHAPTER IX.

**Habitations.****The Dénés nomadic.**

"The term nomadic is not, in fact, properly applicable to any Indian tribe"<sup>1</sup>. That this pronouncement of the able ethnographer H. W. Henshaw, in an article on the popular fallacies concerning the American aborigines, is far wide of the mark I think there cannot be much doubt. For my own part I will make bold to say: all the Dénés were originally nomadic, and the great majority of them have remained so. All the northeastern and intermediate tribes, from the Rocky Mountains to Hudson Bay, are nomadic<sup>2</sup>; some of the Alaskan Dénés are still nomadic, as well as the whole Chilcotin tribe down to a late date; the Apaches when in their normal state were typical nomads, and even to-day the great Navaho tribe may be classed among those who lead a similar kind of life.

For, what is the signification of that word? The Standard Dictionary gives it as "pertaining to or characteristic of nomads; hence having no fixed abodes", and the same authority defines a nomad "a member of a tribe that roves from place to place, seeking pasture". The last definition is applicable almost to the letter even to the modern Navahoes, while none of the above mentioned tribes can be said to have any fixed abode. They form no villages, not any more than the Navahoes of to-day, among whom "places where two or more hogans or huts are within speaking distance, or even within sight of each other, are rare and far between... As a rule, the next hogan or hut may be one mile, perhaps two, five or ten miles away"<sup>3</sup>. And then, as we shall see further on, several of those huts are owned by a single person, who may occupy two or three of them in succession — though they may stand far apart — as he moves about, leading his flock to fresh pastures.

In the north, east of the Rockies, not a sign of a village: mere camps shifted from place to place as the exigencies of the chase may demand.

To be clear and to the point, the Sékanais of northeastern British Columbia constitute an Indian tribe. If, therefore, Henshaw is right in claiming that "the term nomadic is not applicable to any Indian tribe", those abori-

<sup>1</sup> American Anthropologist, vol. VII, pp. 105—06.

<sup>2</sup> As quaint old A. Dobbs has it, "living an erratic Life... they seldom stay above a Fortnight in a Place, unless they find plenty of Game" ("An Account of the Countries adjoining to H. B.", p. 41. London, 1744).

<sup>3</sup> Fr. Leopold in "Catholic Pioneer", April, 1906, p. 10.

gines cannot be nomadic. If not nomadic, it is because they have fixed abodes. Now will any one be so kind as to tell me where these are to be found? There is not among them a single house, inhabited or not, of their own building. They have not even a single regular rendez-vous, apart from the trading posts, near which they will pitch their tents for a week or two. Who can tell me of the whereabouts of any division of the tribe to-day? Now camped in a place, the next thing you will hear is that they have moved out, and are staying miles away from the spot where you may have seen them. And they are fair representatives of all the mountain Dénés, the Beavers, the eastern Nahanaïs, the Slaves, the Hares, in a word of all the eastern groups when in their original state.

Yet we are assured by no less an authority than J. W. Powell, in a most didactic work, "not only that the Indian tribes were in the main sedentary at the time history first records their position, but that they had been sedentary for a very long period"<sup>1</sup>. Speaking of a tribe, to be sedentary is to be settled in one place or condition. The reader knows to what extent this applies to our Dénés.

These inaccurate statements seem to have originated in a misapprehension as to the real condition of things. I would add: in a regrettable looseness of writing, were it not that the incriminated parties are too eminent and careful not to have weighed their expressions. Because the natives generally move within a given perimeter, which represents their ancestral territory, instead of constantly changing their habitat (which they occasionally do), they are represented as sedentary. The Tatars or Mongols may certainly be taken for typical nomads; yet each of their bands has well defined boundaries, which it respects<sup>2</sup>.

The only Déné tribes which are not perfectly nomadic, being in fact semi-sedentary, are those settled in a way within the basin of the Pacific, the Hupas and their neighbouring congeners, the Carriers, the Babines, the western Nahanaïs, and a few bands on the Yukon. These have agglomerations of houses, which may be considered as villages, whither they periodically repair, after they have passed much of their time in the woods without any "fixed abodes".

### Summer Habitations of the Northern Dénés.

The original Dénés lived in semi-circular huts of evergreen boughs laid over a frame-work of stout poles, mere shelters, in fact, rather than attempts

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<sup>1</sup> Seventh Annual Report Bur. of Ethnology, p. 30.

<sup>2</sup> "The Tatars have no permanent abodes and never know where they may be the next day, though every chief of a horde knows the bounds of his pasture grounds" (Rubruck, St. Louis' envoy to the Great Khan in 1253, in *Relation des Voyages*, Bergeron). "Quoique les Tartares soient nomades et sans cesse errants de côté et d'autre, ils ne sont pas libres pourtant d'aller vivre dans un autre pays que le leur" (Huc's *Souvenirs d'un Voyage dans la Tartarie*, vol. I, p. 271).

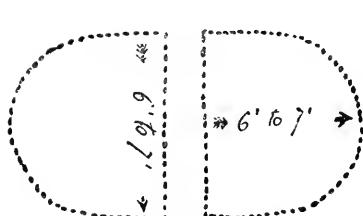
at house building. Whenever practicable these shelters went in pairs, the second hut facing the first so as to complete the circle, yet leaving sufficient room between the two for the fire-place, which was common to both. This arrangement had also the advantage of creating a draft in the proper direction, and reducing to a minimum the amount of smoke in the lodges themselves. It is still followed by the western Dénés whenever they camp out.

The huts of the Loucheux whom Thomas Simpson met on the lower Mackenzie, in the summer of 1837, and indeed those of several other northern tribes visited by the early explorers, were likewise "formed of green branches"<sup>1</sup>. But the author is not precise concerning their respective locations, though he records the fact that they lined the river banks.

Whymper enters into more details concerning the Alaskan Loucheux. He expressly mentions the geminate arrangement of the habitations as still obtaining among the native population of the old Fort Yukon. Those lodges were, he says, "usually placed two together, the doorway facing each other, with a small fire burning between them"<sup>2</sup>.

As they came into contact with the Crees of the south, their innate penchant for imitation made them adopt the well known Algonquin tepees, or conical skin-covered lodges, which are now in almost general use throughout the territory of the eastern Dénés. The accompanying illustration will explain their construction and appearance for the benefit of such as may be entirely unacquainted with American aboriginal technology. Their chief advantages are their portability, their heat-keeping properties, and consequently the economy in fuel which they render possible. The poles that form their framework are easily carried about, a most important consideration in a barren country occupied by nomads, and a few twigs or an inconsiderable quantity of half rotten wood will keep them warm. It is true that delicate eyes may at times be tempted to complain of the smoke; but during the summer months fire is, of course, built outside.

The same receptiveness which prompted the eastern Dénés to adopt the tepees of their southern neighbours induced their western congeners to



*Ground Plan  
of Yukon Loucheux Huts.*

<sup>1</sup> "Narrative" etc., p. 103.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 222. The above had been written for some time when I came upon the accompanying plan of the Yukon Loucheux huts in Fred. Schwatka's "Along Alaska's Great River" (New York, 1885, p. 229), which fully confirms my assertions. The huts described by that explorer were composed of two poles crossed at their upper extremities, forming an angle over the apex of which rested the end of a third or ridge pole, close to which spruce brush was disposed in a semi-circle, with a moose or cariboo skin on top of the

structure. I have seen many such huts among the Sékanais. In a large village on the middle Yukon "the ridge poles were common to two houses, and as both leaned forward considerably, this gave them strength to resist violent winds" (*ubi suprà*, pp. 228—29).

make to themselves large communal houses like those of the heterogeneous Pacific tribes, while, under its impulsion, the Chilcotins copied the subterranean huts prevailing among the coterminous Shushwaps, and the northernmost Loucheux aped the Eskimos by living in tents shaped like the hyperborean *iglois*. But these last two types are winter habitations, and we are so far concerned only with summer residences.

However, before proceeding further, we may remark that the same spirit of emulation sometimes manifests itself in a rather odd manner. Witness the tepee of our illustration, with the door of wooden planks closing an habitation almost entirely of skin.

### Summer Houses of the Western Dénés.

We read in the relation of the second voyage of Jacques Cartier with regard to Hochelaga: "Il y a dans cette ville environ cinquante maisons, longues d'environ cinquante pas au plus chacune, et douze ou quinze pas de large, toutes faites de bois, couvertes et garnies de grandes écorces et pelures des dits bois aussi larges que tables, bien cousues artificiellement selon leur mode; et par dedans icelles il y a plusieurs aires et chambres;

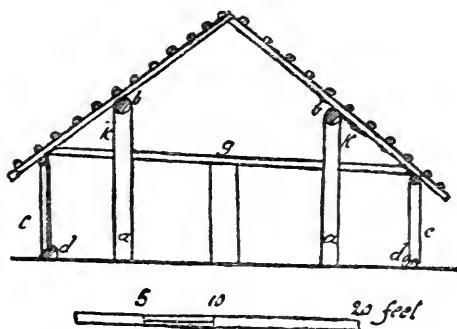


Fig. 12.

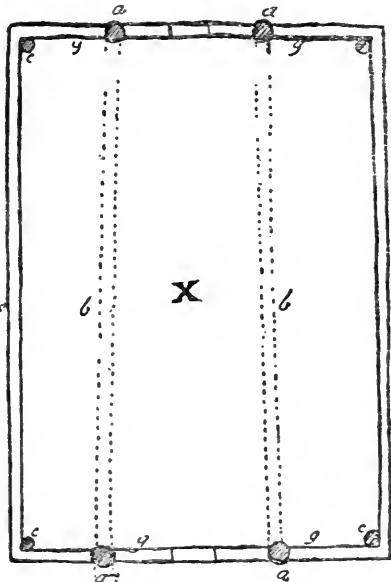


Fig. 13.

et au milieu d'icelles maisons il y a une grande salle par terre, où font leur feu et vivent en communauté. . . Et pareillement ont greniers au haut de leurs maisons, où mettent leur blé duquel ils font leur pain”<sup>1</sup>.

Take out the mention of the rooms and granaries, and you have a description that fits exactly the communal houses of the Carriers, Babines and western Nahanaïs. In my “Notes on the Western Dénés” I have given a minute account of their construction which is too long to be reproduced here. If the reader will kindly glance at fig. 12, he will gather a general idea of their appearance, and fig. 13, wherein we have a ground plan and cross-section of the same, will help him to form a fairly correct notion of its component parts. Let it suffice to say that the walls and gable ends are made of rough split boards, and the roof of spruce bark laid over purlines fastened to the rafters. The bark is held in position by means of long poles connected at the apex of the roof so as to rest saddle-wise on either side.

These large houses have generally a doorway at both gable ends, and they accommodate several related families that profit by the same fire, which is in the centre. Their erection demands the co-operation of many hands, and is the occasion of great festivities.

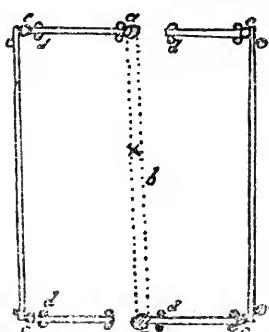


Fig. 14.

When the families of one clan are too numerous to inhabit a single communal house, some erect smaller lodges, the ground plan of which is herewith figured (fig. 14). It will be understood that *a* stands for heavy upright posts supporting long beams *b*. The walls are simply superimposed poles kept up by means of pairs of stakes *d* driven in the ground immediately on the inside and the outside of the wall. Many such primitive buildings are still extant, notably through the hunting grounds of the Babines.

Such were the typical summer dwellings of the Carriers and the Babines, not only as they have been

minutely described to me by the natives, but as I have seen them myself in many places. It would seem, however, that there were deviations from the architectural rules that governed their construction, since Mackenzie says that the first he saw, in 1793, had three doors, with three fire-places at equal distances from each other, two particularities which never came to my personal notice. He also states that the walls of the house were five feet high, made of “very strait (*sic*) spruce timbers brought close together and laid into each other at the corners<sup>2</sup>. The highest house wall I ever saw in the north was at least one foot lower. The reader will remark that said walls were built according to the pattern of the minor summer houses described above. The

<sup>1</sup> Relation, Chapter VII.

<sup>2</sup> “Voyages from Montreal”, vol. II. p. 137.

fact that the explorer goes on to speak of arrow holes on the sides of the lodge may account for its peculiar construction and height, as it was evidently built to withstand an attack.

Much simpler than all the above are the habitations of the Tsœtsaut. They are mere bark shelters leaning against large trees and formed by two forked poles, perhaps seven feet long, connected by cross-sticks. The fire-place is at the foot of the tree. Should two families wish to live together, two of these structures are joined in such a way that they stand end to end, though the roof of one side is made to overlap that of the other, as seen in fig. 15. Such huts have a door on each vertical side.

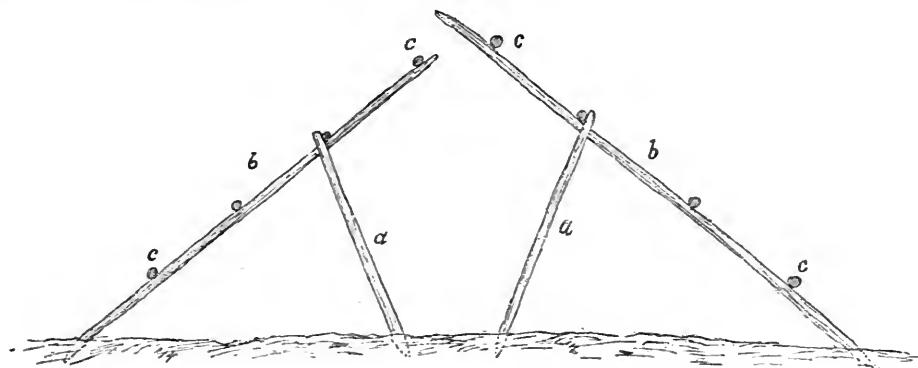


Fig. 15.

Before proceeding further, it may be noted that, in common with the nomadic Tatars, the western Dénés almost invariably have the doors of their permanent dwellings face the south. Their villages are always on the north side of the lakes they may be situated on.

### Summer Houses in the South.

As to the houses of the Hupas, they bear some resemblance to the summer or ceremonial lodges of the Carriers: the same low walls of rough boards, the same round hole cut for a doorway at the gable end as I have seen in some villages of that tribe, though the entrance was often rectangular in shape. But among the Hupas the roof is a double planking, and in houses of some pretensions this is built in three sections, that is, with an upper part quite flat and horizontal, flanked on either side with the usual sloping roofs. These dwellings have also a sort of vestibule made by the addition of a second wall across the front end, perhaps three feet from the outer one.

In the main dwelling a place is excavated in the centre twelve feet square by about five in depth, which constitutes the principal room, to which access is had by means of a stout board in which steps have been cut. As usual, the fire is in the middle, with a corresponding aperture in the roof for the smoke to escape.

The earthen walls of the excavation are retained by planks set on edge, and the winter provisions are stored in baskets lying upon the banks of earth that flank the family room, except at the entrance end, where the fire-wood is kept as in the modern houses of the Babines and the old winter huts of the Carriers<sup>1</sup>. The style proper to those habitations was copied from the neighbouring tribes of the Klamath River region.

The summer residences of the Navahoes are extremely primitive; in fact, mere shelters of rudely piled brushwood. Types of more careful construction are: boughs in foliage set round in a circle near some conveniently spreading cedar tree, which is utilized to form a latticed roof for the enclosure; simple scaffolds framed around with interlacing boughs, and many quaint little sheds made of branches leaning upon a straight pole supported by forked uprights. A. M. Stephen says that six forms of summer bowers are recognized and appropriately named by the Navahoes.

As they have no tradition that they ever lived in skin lodges, and as, on the other hand, they are of all the Dénés the people richest in traditions, it might be inferred that their separation from their northern kinsmen antedates the adoption by the latter of the Algonquin tepee.

As we reach the Apache hordes we are confronted by still another and, if possible, even more primitive or at least more picturesque, style of architecture. Our illustration will give an excellent idea of the outward appearance of their *khúvas* or huts. Their ground plan is slightly oval, measuring from ten to twelve feet in its longer diameter and eight or nine across, while they are fully nine feet in height. The poles that form their framework are generally of green willow clear of bark, and stuck in the ground every two feet or so, with the tops bent down and tied together. The usual opening for the escape of smoke is left in the middle of the upper part of the structure.

Once this is finished, the ground is excavated inside to a depth of a foot or more, and the earth piled against the base of the khúva, as a protection against floods. The sheeting shown in our illustration is canvas, which is often added as a further means of protecting the inmates against rain. This replaces the skins formerly used, which still occasionally enter into the composition of the sides, when the roofing is made of bundles of long rushes, the well known tule (*Scirpus lacustris*) of the south.

The whole work of khúva building is performed by the women, who usually complete it in a single day.

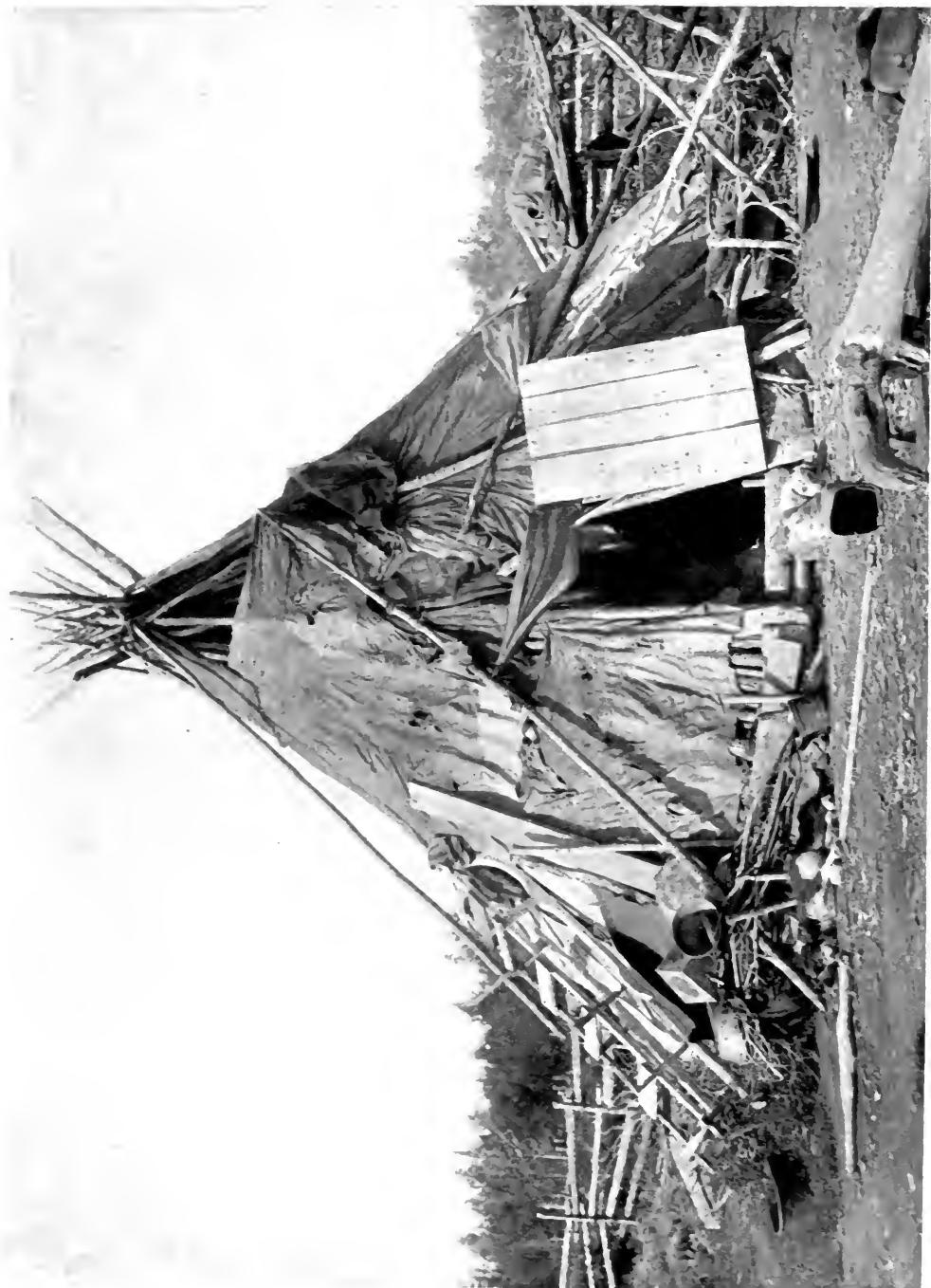
### Winter Habitations.

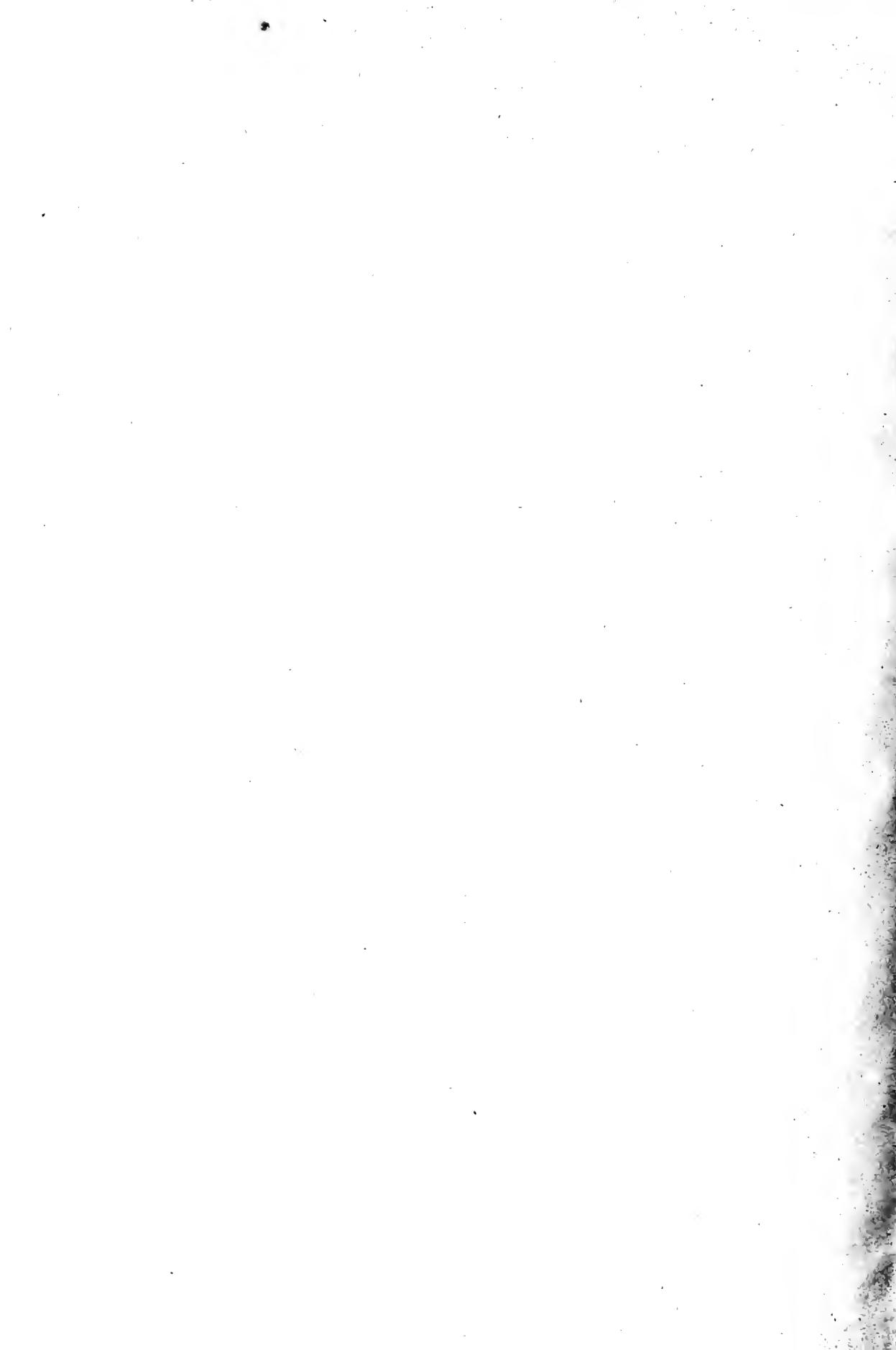
Several tribes have special styles of habitations for the cold season. The Apaches then simply make their khúvas smaller, that they may be warmer. But the Navahoes construct for the winter houses which are altogether differ-

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Goddard's "Life and Culture of the Hupa".

The Dawn of Civilisation: Apache Lodges.





ent from their summer shanties. These are the *hogans*, or houses properly so called. The hogan is their national and only permanent habitation. Nothing palatial about it, however: simply a conical structure, the mainstay of which is three short piñon trees whose forked smaller ends interlock so as to form the apex which, being left uncovered, does duty as a chimney. Two small forked uprights connected by a horizontal stick about four feet from the ground are set to serve as the lintel and door posts of an entrance which must face directly the east. Stout poles and branches then fill up the two other sides of the hut in a circular order, which are further covered with weeds, bark or grass and earth. In the doorway an old blanket or skin hangs down, which reminds the comparative sociologist of the felt suspended with the same end in view in front of the entrances of the Mongols' habitations<sup>1</sup>, and the salmon skins sewn together which serve a like purpose in connection with the winter huts of the Carriers.

The average dimensions of a hogan are about fourteen feet in diameter. A light excavation of the ground floor contributes to give it some seven feet in height. Slabs of stone also enter occasionally in the make up of those hovels. Nay, Schoolcraft goes so far as to give, but wrongly, this style as the national "Navaho wigwam"<sup>2</sup>. According to the same author "the fire for cooking is external".

The Carrier winter hut was more elaborate in its construction. But, strange to say, while the hogan is the only habitation of the Navahoes that can claim any degree of permanency, their summer shelters being hastily built and as speedily abandoned, the winter residences of the northerners lasted only one season and their summer lodges remained in use as long as they were in good repair. New winter quarters were prepared every

year in such spots as promised to yield the best supply of fire-wood, a consideration not to be overlooked with an inclement climate like that of the Carrier habitat.

Four posts *a* supported two longitudinal beams or plates *b*, over which split poles of spruce or aspen were laid in a slanting position from the outside, thus forming a roof without walls, the split sides resting immediately

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Huc's "Christianity in China, Tartary", etc., vol. I, p. 178.

<sup>2</sup> "Archives of Aboriginal Knowledge", vol. III, p. 70.

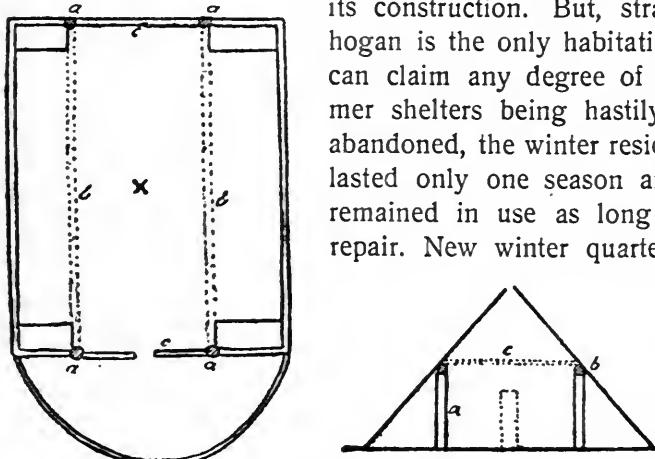


Fig. 16.

on the plates *b*. To ensure additional comfort and warmth inside, the lower end of each stick was covered up with earth. The middle ones were made purposely shorter, so as to create an opening for the smoke. A covering of spruce bark was then added, with poles resting against it for a support.

To form the gable end opposite to the entrance a transversal beam *c* was laid on side plate *b*, while uprights filled in the whole space, over which fascines of evergreens or saplings leant so as to close all possible interstices. As to the entrance, it was formed by two stakes driven in the ground and the resulting space either closed by means of sewn salmon skins, or by a large board which, suspended from above, was allowed to swing in or out according to the movements of the inmates.

As a further precaution against the cold, a door-yard or vestibule was added by means of poles whose small ends rested on the gable, while their butts described a semi-circle on the ground. An additional entrance was closed by some worthless skin in the hair. This semi-circular appendage was covered with brush, and served not only as a shelter for fire-wood, but also as a kennel for the dogs and a bath-room for the old men. The whole structure will be better understood by a glance at fig. 16, which shows both ground plan and cross-section of the same.

### Circular Huts or Tents.

Figs. 17 and 18 give respectively the frame and a transversal cut of a very different type of building. It was used in winter by the southern Carriers and the Chilcotins, who had borrowed it from the neighbouring Shushwaps. This was the famous *tlizkhæn* or underground hut. The accom-

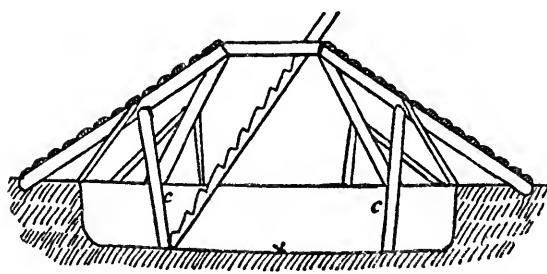


Fig. 17.

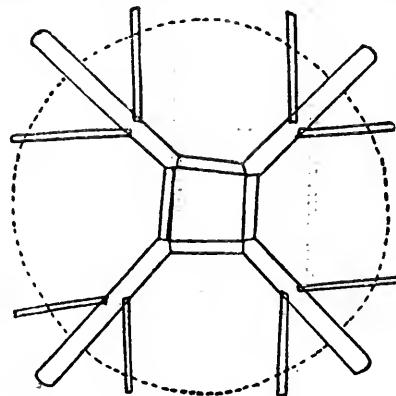


Fig. 18.

panying figures are plain enough to require no more than a very few words of explanation. An excavation was made some three feet deep and about eighteen in diameter, after which the butt ends of four large beams were laid some distance from the brim, while their smaller ends were locked in those of as many shorter beams, which formed at the same time the door way and the chimney of the hut. The main posts, protected by inner props, were covered by split poles laid over additional stakes (fig. 18).

These subterranean huts were quite warm, but somewhat malodorous. The natives occupied them from October-November to some time in April or May. The reader no doubt recognizes in the middle of fig. 17 the typical Indian ladder, a notched log, which served as a means of communication with the outside<sup>1</sup>.

Strange enough, the Loucheux of the lower Mackenzie, whose habitat is no less than fifteen degrees of latitude north of the Chilcotin territory, instead of burrowing in the earth as the latter or in the snow as the Eskimos, dwell in mere tents, even during their long and exceptionally severe winters. And yet they manage to keep but a very small fire in the centre of their tents or lodges, and the resulting warmth is as great as in a log house. The beautiful coloured illustration, which I reproduce from Richardson, gives an excellent idea of these lodges, which, to quote that author, "resemble the Eskimo snow huts in shape, and also the *yourts* of the Asiatic Anadyrski"<sup>2</sup>.

He might have added that they are not without analogy with the Mongolian tents, which likewise affect a cylindrical form, with a roof like a truncated cone. To complete the similarity, according to the abbé Huc, who lived in them, "des barres de bois partent de la circonférence conique et vont se réunir au sommet, à peu près comme les baguettes d'un parapluie... La porte est basse, étroite... Outre la porte, il y a une autre ouverture pratiquée au-dessus du cône. C'est par là que s'échappe la fumée"<sup>3</sup>.

A glance at Richardson's (or rather A. H. Murray's) picture of the Loucheux tent will suffice to notice its Mongolian appearance. It is of deer skin with the hair on, extended over flexible willow poles, which are bent so as to give it a semi-spherical shape. They follow the hunter in his many peregrinations. To erect such a tent, the ground is first cleared of snow, some of which is afterwards packed on the outside to half its height, while the corresponding inside parts are lined with spruce spray to prevent contact with the cold wall. The doorway is closed by a double fold of skin.

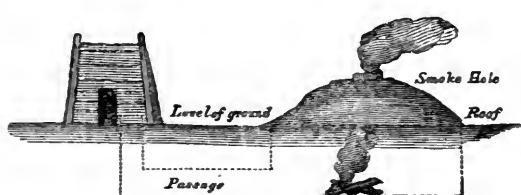


Fig. 19.

For the sake of greater comfort these tents are usually erected within groves of spruce trees, in the branches of which are cached most of the family provisions and impedimenta.

In Alaska, or at least on the lower Yukon, the Loucheux would seem to have adopted for winter

<sup>1</sup> Both the subterranean hut and the notched log ladder have their counterparts in eastern Siberia (Cf. Bush, "Reindeer, Dogs, and Snow-Shoes", pp. 103; 351—52). The general features of the Déné habitations: fire-place in the middle, with a corresponding hole in the roof for the escape of the smoke, and beddings of evergreen boughs covered with skins, are also to be found there (*Ibid.*, pp. 123; 136; 227, and *passim*).

<sup>2</sup> "Arctic Searching Exploration", vol. I, p. 393.

<sup>3</sup> "Souvenirs d'un Voyage dans la Tartarie", vol. I, p. 62.

use another type of conical hut, mostly underground and with a passage-way which recalls that of the Eskimo *igloit*. Fred. Whymper describes those huts as "simply square holes in the ground, roofed in, and earthed over. The entrance of each was a rude skanty (fig. 19) of logs or planks, passing into which we found a hole in the ground, the entrance to a subterranean passage. Into this we dropped and crawled on our hands and knees into the room"<sup>1</sup>.

He then adds the following picturesque details which well illustrate Indian camp life. "The fire was built on the floor in the centre of the chamber and when it burnt low the embers and sticks were always thrown out of the smoke-hole in the roof by the natives inside, and it was then covered with a skin. This process effectually shut in all the warmth, but with it a good deal of smoke and carbonic acid gas. The entrance hole was also usually covered with a deer skin, and the mixture of those smells inside the house, arising from more or less stale fish, old skin clothes, young dogs, dirt and smoke, was very sickening. The dogs scrambling and fighting on the roof above, sometimes tumbled through the smoke-hole on to the fire below, upsetting all the cooking arrangements, and adding a new smell to those above mentioned—that of singed hair! It need not be said that they retreated with great alacrity, yelping and snarling as they went"<sup>2</sup>.

### House Furnishing and Etiquette.

Needless to say that the furnishing of even the best equipped Déné lodge was of an extreme scantiness. In fact, the only equivalent of our own furniture was the stools of the Hupas, mere cross-sections of trees about a foot high. To the best of my knowledge, this is the only Déné tribe that was acquainted with that commodity. Elsewhere people simply squatted on the floor or the bedding. No aboriginal Déné had the faintest idea of a table or of a bedstead.

They sleep almost invariably on either side of the fire when dwelling in rectangular habitations. For a bed the northern tribes spread small spruce branches in an imbricated manner, with the top ends towards the feet. These, of course, have to be renewed from time to time. Over that layer they have a deer or bear skin with the fur on, and the bedding is complete. They sleep with practically all their clothes, except the footgear, and cover themselves with a single blanket. No degree of cold will persuade them to have two.

In cold weather the fire is kept burning all night long, and stretching their naked feet in the direction of the hearth is all the comfort they will seek. Even in the woods, camping under a simple cotton shelter open to all kinds of wind, when 40° below zero prevented me from having a wink of

<sup>1</sup> "Travel and Adventure in the Territory of Alaska", p. 152.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 153—54.

sleep, I have heard my companions snore under their dilapidated blankets as they would have done in the most comfortable palace.

The beds of the Hupas consist of deer skin. But if the family is rich, they may have couches of tule mats imported from the coast.

In Harmon's time (1815), the bedding of the Carriers was exceptionally poor, many of them passing their nights with "nothing to lie on except the branches of thee spruce fir tree, with little or nothing with which to cover themselves"<sup>1</sup>. He adds that "almost any other people, in the same condition, would freeze to death".

Speaking of the Carriers, Mackenzie mentions that, in the first of their houses he saw, "behind the beds was a narrow space in the form of a manger and somewhat elevated, which was appropriated to the purpose of keeping fish<sup>2</sup>.

Then long poles or wooden rods were generally laid across the rafters, which served to keep out of the way the many accessories of even a primitive household, notably one that was used to dry the pieces of attire, leggings, foot bands and mocassins, when wet after travelling over the snow. The women's impedimenta were generally stored in baskets kept in the partitioned corner spaces of the Carrier winter hut (see fig. 16). These receptacles were made of roughly hewn planks set up to the height of three or four feet. In olden times marriageable maidens are also said to have slept therein.

As to the house etiquette, it was not complicated, but what there was of it was very strictly observed. All primitive peoples, the Mongols, Ainos, etc., reserve for the place of honour in the house that which is farthest from the doorway. The same can be said of all the Déné tribes without exception. The space near the door is for the menials, the orphans, the widows, and the dogs. To place a stranger there, especially if a man of some note, would be nothing short of a gross insult.

### Outbuildings.

Scarcely possessing any fixed abode, the Dénés cannot be expected to be rich in outbuildings. No tribe, however, is without its sudatories; most of them have regular provision stores; many erect menstrual booths, and in some localities there is also an agglomeration of fishing shacks.

The sudatory, or vapour-bath, is a national institution with the American Indians. No well organized household seems complete without it, as it serves both ritual and hygienic purposes. It takes generally the shape of an old style bee-hive, constructed by bending long twigs of willow disposed diagonally over one another, and fixing both ends in the ground so as to form a round booth not unlike the houses of the Apaches. This is carefully

<sup>1</sup> "An Account of the Indians", p. 277.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 138.

covered with branches, herbage, bark or anything that will prevent the escape of steam.

When ready for use, red-hot stones are introduced, all issues closed, and the patient, stark naked, pours water over them, remaining in the midst of the resulting steam as long as he can. Then he rushes out and plunges into a cold stream.

Such is in two words the famous vapour-bath of the American aborigines. It is a sovereign remedy for many ailments, especially rheumatism and paralysis.

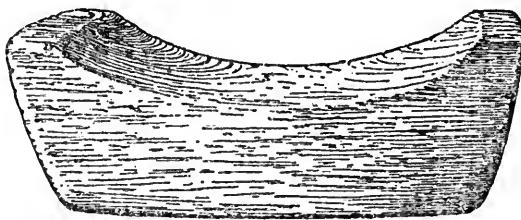


Fig. 20.

With the Hupas these sweat-houses assume more pretentious proportions. They are even, according to Dr. Goddard, the normal residence of the men. They consist in pits about eighteen feet long by fifteen in width, covered with an ordinary gable roof resting on the outside ground. The door is in the side of the roof which faces the river, and the descent is by means of the usual Indian ladder. In this underground hut there is a further pit for the fire near the centre, which is lined with pipestone, while the floor itself is covered with planks of yellow pine (*P. ponderosa*), between which all possible interstices are cemented with clay.

A peculiar piece of furniture therein is the head-rest (fig. 20), which does duty as a pillow.

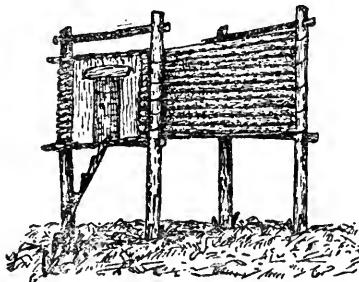


Fig. 21.

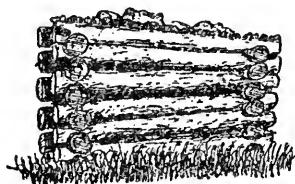


Fig. 22.

The caches, or provision stores, are erected near the family residence or in a special quarter of the village. They are common all over the north. Fig. 21, which represents the Carrier type of the same, obviates the necessity of any description. The reader will understand that the whole structure is of poles and posts, and that its main object is the storing of salmon or other fish, dried meat, and occasionally furs as well, out of the

reach of dogs and rats. Having the rodents in mind, the Carrier always strips of their bark the uprights, which he strives to render as smooth-surfaced as possible.

That style of caches<sup>1</sup> is, with one exception, general throughout the basin of the North Pacific, including the Alaskan Loucheux. The exception is formed by the Chilcotins, whose stores, or depositories, follow the pattern of fig. 22 which, however, is evidently of modern origin.

When the Sékanais and other strictly roving tribes happen to be blessed with an abundance of dried meat, they usually erect a sort of scaffolding immediately against the trunk of a tall tree, which constitutes their only cache. Two stout poles crossed against the tree to which they are fastened at their points of intersection, with their ends secured in the branches thereof, form the frame-work of the cache, over which rough boards or split sticks serve as a floor. Thereon are deposited the eatables and other goods, generally well wrapped, or in sacks or bark vessels.

The menstrual lodge has no regulation style or fixed shape in the north. It is simply a shelter or booth of foliage, often covered with spruce bark among the Carriers. But the Hupas almost raise it to the dignity of an institution by decorating it with a name of its own, *mintc*. Yet even there it consists merely of a pit roofed with planks.

The fishing lodge is a mere shack open to every wind, with low walls of superposed poles held up by pairs of uprights and a roof of spruce bark, much like that of the smaller summer house. There is an entrance without any door, and the walls of the gable ends are not any higher than those of the sides, thereby leaving open the triangular space extending to the apex of the shack. Perfect ventilation is thereby established, and air has unimpeded access to the fish left to dry, suspended from the usual long rods resting on the rafters. With the same end in view, no attempt is made to fill in the numerous chinks between the component parts of the walls.

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<sup>1</sup> *Cache* is a French word, much used by the traders, which is derived from the verb *cacher*, to hide away. The same style of aerial stores prevails also throughout eastern Siberia.

## CHAPTER X.

**Cooking and Eating.**

To attempt an enumeration of the many items which may enter into the *menu* of some thirty-five tribes scattered over half a continent would be both tedious and difficult. By describing in the three following chapters the main pursuits of the Dénés, we will place the reader in a position to gather that venison, fish and berries are their staple food. We know already that the flesh of the reindeer in the northeast, salmon in the west, and mutton with the Navahoës constitute the normal sources of subsistence. When we come to treat of the various tribal occupations, we shall have an occasion to enlarge on the various results of their exertions in that line. Before giving an account of their cooking and eating, we must expose the nature of several of their delicacies, a subject which does not logically fall under any other heading than that of this chapter. Then will it be realized that, while the Dénés relish dishes that seem, to say the least, strange to a European palate, they carefully abstain from others that we know to be genuine treats for the gourmet.

**Unspeakable Dishes.**

Let me first introduce the great luxury of the northern Epicures, a mess which is as esteemed to-day<sup>1</sup> as it was in the days of Hearne, I mean the half digested contents of the reindeer's stomach. In order that I may not be suspected of exaggeration, I shall quote that author's description of the dish and of its preparation.

"The most remarkable dish among them, as well as all the other tribes of Indians in those parts, both Northern and Southern, is blood mixed with the half-digested food which is found in the deer's stomach or paunch, and boiled up with a sufficient quantity of water, to make it of the consistence of pease-pottage. Some fat and scraps of tender flesh are also shred small and boiled with it. To render this dish more palatable, they have a method of mixing the blood with the contents of the stomach in the paunch itself,

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Whitney's "On Snow-Shoes to the Barren Grounds", p. 284. Speaking of a journey by George Kennan's party through the land of the Tchuktchis, R. J. Bush says that "soup made from the contents of the deer's stomach succeeded their own well selected rations" ("Reindeer, Dogs, and Snow-Shoes", p. 344). As everybody knows, the Tchuktchis are aborigines of northeastern Siberia.

and hanging it up in the heat and smoke of the fire for several days; which puts the whole mass into a state of fermentation, and gives it such an agreeable acid taste, that were it not for prejudice, it might be eaten by those who have the nicest palates. It is true some people with delicate stomachs would not be easily persuaded to partake of this dish, especially if they saw it dressed; for most of the fat which is boiled in it is first chewed by the men and boys, in order to break the globules that contain the fat... In winter, when the deer feed on fine white moss, the content of the stomach is so esteemed by them, that I have often seen them sit round a deer where it was killed, and eat it warm out of the paunch"<sup>1</sup>.

The young calves, fawns, beaver, etc. taken from the womb of their dams are also reckoned most delicate food.

Toothsome morsels are also the genital organs of any eatable animal, either male or female. Those of the males are usually very tough; yet the men and boys, who alone enjoy the privilege of eating them, must not on any account use a cutting tool to facilitate the operation. That piece must be torn with the teeth. Should any part prove too tough to be masticated, it is thrown on the fire and burnt, for fear of its being appropriated by a dog, with the natural consequence that the efficiency of the hunter would be forever gone as regards the fellows of the animal thus slighted.

The eastern Dénés are also very fond of the womb of the elk, deer, etc., which they devour without washing, or any other preparation than striking out its contents. This is the most disgusting of their dishes, about which the less said the better.

They are more cleanly with the tripe of cariboo and other large game. These are fairly well washed, and generally boiled and eaten while more substantial parts of the animal are cooking, just as is customary among the Tatars, with this single difference that the latter add thereto the blood of their victim mixed with oatmeal. One of these ante-prandial bouts by the nomads squatting round the kettle full of tripe such as described by Huc<sup>2</sup> seems an exact counterpart of the eager devouring by our Dénés of the intestines of the game they have just dispatched.

According to Hearne, the flesh of the eagle, raven and hawks is always eaten by the northlanders. To my knowledge this is not the case in the west. Speaking of the Indians east of the Rocky Mountains, Harmon says that they "frequently eat the flesh of the dog; and our Canadian voyageurs are as fond of it as of any other meat". He adds: "I have frequently eaten of them myself; and have found them as palatable as a young pig and much of the same flavour"<sup>3</sup>. That he is right when he speaks of the French

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 317—18.

<sup>2</sup> *Souvenirs d'un Voyage*, vol. I, pp. 344—45.

<sup>3</sup> "An account of the Indians living E. of the Rocky Mountain", p. 281.

Canadian employees of the fur trading companies there is absolutely no doubt. They otherwise fared so badly that they found dog meat a veritable treat. The dogs then requisitioned were the small wolf-like canines which we might call aboriginal. These, however, were reputed unclean animals by the Dénés, who, to the best of my knowledge, never used them as an article of food<sup>1</sup>.

### Other queer Dishes.

The Carriers had other delicacies, among which half putrid salmon roe and a most stinking oil extracted from the same fish held a prominent place. The wayfarer through their country cannot help observing the many cavities, evidently of an artificial origin, that dot the immediate vicinity of their streams or the outskirts of their ancient village sites. They are the pits wherein the fish roe was formerly deposited and covered up with earth for a twelvemonth or so. At the expiration of that time, it was considered sufficiently done, and consumed, raw or cooked, generally with preserved berries. In this advanced stage of putrefaction it was deemed the most dainty morsel imaginable, though Harmon is inconsiderate enough to declare that it then fills the air with a terrible stench, and even to a considerable distance. This is certainly true of their nasty fish oil, and I heartily concur in his statement that "a person who eats this food, and rubs salmon oil in his hands, can be smelt in warm weather, to a distance of nearly a quarter of a mile"<sup>2</sup>.

This salmon roe may be regarded as the western counterpart of the raw fish eyes which the Chippewayans eagerly gouge out and eat on the spot as soon as the fish is taken out of the water. They also frequently make their meals on raw fish or meat when this is frozen. As to the Carriers, the above quoted author assures us that they squeeze the roes out of fresh fish "through its natural outlet into their mouths and swallow them with avidity"<sup>3</sup>.

Nor will the modern Dénés of the east be left behind in the knowledge of the best way to enjoy fish roe. Witness this passage from Petitot, which a delicate reader little familiar with French should not make particular efforts to understand: "Les sauvages sont friands du frai de ce saumonide. Ils n'attendent pas qu'il ait vu le feu pour s'en repaître. Rien de dégoûtant comme de voir les pêcheurs, élevant le poisson tout vivant à la hauteur de leur bouche, en comprimer les flancs pour en exprimer les œufs qu'ils

<sup>1</sup> On his visit to the Gilaks of eastern Siberia, R. J. Bush saw, *inter alia*, an old woman "catching vermin from the head of a dirty-faced girl, and disposing of them in a manner not very conducive to one's appetite" ("Reindeer, Dogs, and Snow-Shoes", p. 124). We have already noticed the Dénés' partiality to that food.

<sup>2</sup> "An Account", etc., p. 281.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 280.

avalent crus et gluants. D'autres fois ils têtent ces pauvres bêtes pour se procurer le même régal"<sup>1</sup>.

In the south, the Navahoes and Apaches delight in horse and burro meat; nor do they despise that of the prairie dog, after which the cactus berries (*Opuntia arborescens*) will occasionally form a welcome dessert. With the fruit of the *Yuccata baccata* the same Indians make also a sort of jelly or soft candy, and in by-gone days they likewise utilized for alimentary purposes the berries of the juniper and the seeds of some species of grasses.

Conspicuous among the roots and plants eaten by the Hupas is the soap-root (*Chlorogalum pomeridianum*) which is esteemed for its size and abundance. The bulbs are baked in pits lined with rocks, with a fire built on top and the leaves of the wild grape and the wood sorrel added to improve their flavour. Those aborigines also put to contribution for the same purposes the fresh shoots of many plants, as well as the seeds of grasses of the *Compositae* family.

In the north, many plants and roots are likewise relished by the Dénés, to which the white man would never give a thought. Without mentioning those the gathering of which shall form one of the chief subjects of a subsequent chapter<sup>2</sup>, we have the wild onion (*Allium cernuum*), which is eaten, root and leaves, either raw or slightly roasted in the ashes. So is the dog-tooth (*Erythronium giganteum*), the root of which is considered excellent.

In the cow-parsnip (*Heracleum lanatum*) it is the inner part of the growing stalks which is preferred. It is often used while fresh and without any preparation save the stripping of its fibrous envelope. But if fire is at hand, a Carrier will generally treat it to a slight roasting through the flames previous to peeling off the stalk.

The marrow of the willow herb (*Epilobium spicatum*) is also much esteemed as are likewise the leaves of the Oregon grape (*Berberis aquifolium*), which are usually simmered in a little water until no liquid remains.

Another article of food, cheap because very common but not the least prized by the westerners, is the hair-like lichen (*Alectoria jubata*), which grows hanging from most coniferous trees, especially the Douglas fir. The natives wash it so thoroughly that it loses its colouring matter, after which they mix it with dough as one would do with raisins, and bake the whole. The lichen has then on the cake the same effect as a copious application of yeast powder. The Carriers are very fond of this, and they claim that thus prepared it is very sweet and savoury. Prior to the introduction of flour they cooked it with grease.

This wild alimentary resource recalls to mind the *tripe de roche*, a species of lichen of the *Gyrophora* genus, which grows in the far northeast.

<sup>1</sup> *Autour du Grand Lac des Esclaves*, p. 71.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter XIII.

Inasmuch as it has been instrumental in saving the life of many a stranded or unlucky wayfarer, it may be called the last hope of the famished and starving. It is repeatedly mentioned in the fourth volume of Franklin's Journal, in connection with the fateful crossing of the barren grounds by his party.

### Cooking.

While so many unlikely representatives of the animal and vegetable kingdoms are thus made to contribute to the support of the northlander, quite a few, which appear to us most appetizing food, are entirely rejected by the child of the desert, north and south, as unfit for that purpose, because under the ban of the strictest taboo. This point shall be fully treated when we come to speak of the Dénés' vain observances. For the present we must be concerned only with the questions of cooking and eating.

Owing to the absence of all kinds of wood on the Barren Grounds, the Indians of the northeast sometimes cannot cook their food. They will then eat it raw, apparently without repugnance. The same frequently happens in the west as regards dried meat or fish, large quantities of which are devoured by the hunter who has no opportunity to light a fire, or who is too greedy to wait for that which is cooking.

Fire was originally produced by means of a hard stick used as a drill over touchwood, generally covered with dry blades of grass or any other inflammable material. Instead of a bow to turn it and a mouth-piece to press it down, as is customary with the Eskimos, the Dénés ordinarily used nothing but the palms of both hands, which they rubbed hard against one another while grasping the fire-stick. Once lit, the fire was hardly ever allowed to go out during the winter.

The Dog-Rib girl whom Hearne found alone in the woods had procured it by means of sparks developed through knocking two hard stones against one another, a circumstance which led the explorer to doubt whether the tribe to which she belonged knew of any other way of obtaining fire. His surmise that it did not cannot have any foundation on fact.

Nowadays when the Indians find themselves without matches while away from camp, they simply fire off their guns at close range over touchwood and dry grass, the initial smouldering of which they immediately fan into bright flames.

The Déné utensils being of a very perishable material, birch bark generally and twined basket-work on the lower Mackenzie, cooking with them necessitated special precautions. Two methods of boiling fish or meat obtained till a relatively late date. The first, which was less common in the north, was by suspending the bark kettle over the fire, as is done with modern vessels, save for this important restriction that the fire was then to be quite subdued and flameless or the utensil placed so as to be out of its reach. Its

handle rested over the forked end of a green stick planted close by the fire-place. Figs. 23 and 24 show good specimens of aboriginal bark kettles. The former is the Carrier pattern, and the latter is the reproduction of Hearne's own sketch illustrating an eastern style of the same.

But the most general way of boiling was by means of hot stones. Any basket or similar receptacle could then be used, which rested immediately on the ground, not far from the hearth. For fish they first heated the water by dropping red-hot stones therein, when the fish, duly cut up, was put in, scales and fins. Then a new supply of hot stones was added, and by the time they had cooled down the fish was considered cooked.

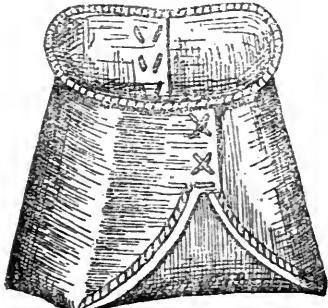


Fig. 23.

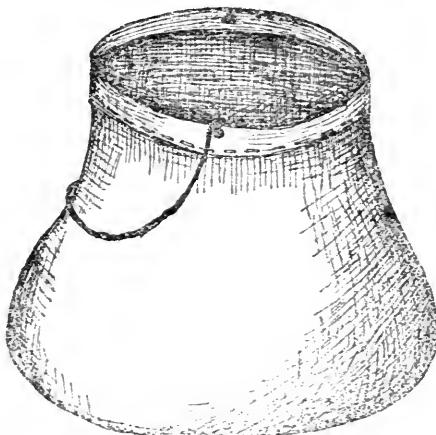


Fig. 24.

Meat was similarly treated. But the changes of hot stones had to be more numerous, though it is safe to say that the natives never eat their food well done.

Fish is also roasted either on the ashes or more often exposed to the action of the flames by means of a wooden spit stuck in the ground at the proper distance from the fire. Another favourite method is to take the frozen fish and heat it hastily on the coals until the flesh next to the bones begins to thaw. It is then esteemed well cooked. But if it is dried salmon which is to be the *pièce de résistance* of the meal, it is either slightly broiled by exposure to the flames or boiled in a kettle. In the latter case, it must have passed a night soaking in the water.

Meat is also very often roasted by being hung up before the flames. The true aboriginal way of disposing of it then is to approach the roasting spit, bite into the morsel that is cooking and cut off the mouthful with a knife. This eaten, the operation is continued, the native repeatedly biting into the piece of meat and cutting off the mouthful at the risk of carving

into his own nose, until the remaining morsel is not considered any too large to be swallowed at once<sup>1</sup>.

Of course, salt as a seasoning adjunct was never resorted to, and even to-day it is hardly ever used in the north.

To cook marmot meat, the animal is often cast in its entirety upon the fire, and when so thoroughly singed that the skin commences to crack, the carving process is commenced and the pieces of meat either boiled or roasted. The Navahoes prepare their corn in the form of hominy, balls or mush; the green corn is baked in its husks, and a kind of pancake or tortilla is also made by them of corn meal.

Cooking and all that pertains to cooking is, of course, woman's work. Yet, strange enough, the manly Loucheux will not eat meat prepared by a woman, if we are to believe Richardson<sup>2</sup>. Among them cooking is man's office, he declares. On the other hand, no Carrier will ever stoop to as much as fetch water for the cook. This is reserved for the women, the children and the orphans of both sexes.

### Gormandizing.

The elasticity of the Indians' stomach is truly prodigious. They will gorge themselves with food until a stranger may wonder how they do not burst, after which they feel prepared to stand a fast of several days' duration. Enter their huts at any time after a successful hunt, sit there if you like for a whole day, and you will scarcely find the fire unoccupied a single moment. As Th. Simpson says, when not hunting or travelling, they are always eating if awake. They may not consume much at a time, except at feasts, but somehow they manage to renew the operation on the most frivolous pretext. "Now, it is a little roast, a partridge or rabbit perhaps; now, a tid-bit broiled under the ashes; anon, a portly kettle, well filled with venison, swings over the fire; then comes a choice dish of curdled blood, followed by the sinews and marrow-bones of deer's legs singed on the embers. And so the grand business of life goes unceasingly round, interrupted only by sleep"<sup>3</sup>.

That author's namesake and distant relative, Sir George Simpson, says of the Yakutis of eastern Siberia that "they are the best eaters on the face

<sup>1</sup> The above had been written for some time when I came upon the following from R. J. Bush's "Reindeer, Dogs, and Snow-Shoes", p. 281: "Sheath-knives were their only table implements. Each one, taking a huge piece of venison, put as much of it as he possibly could in his mouth, and then, by a dexterous up-stroke of his knife, shaved it off close to his lips, the edge barely grazing the end of his nose as he severed the meat. Little children were as expert as the adults in handling their knives, and, though I was in constant dread of seeing one of their noses sliced off, the caldron was emptied without a single accident". The natives he speaks of are the Tunguses of eastern Siberia.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 383.

<sup>3</sup> "Narrative of the Discoveries", p. 324.

of the world"<sup>1</sup>. This is perhaps a slightly rash assertion, which can be excused only on the plea that the writer was not familiar with the eating capacities of the northern Dénés. True, he instances a feat of two Siberians which, if truly reported, exceeds anything I have seen in the north. But the ingurgitating competition he mentions was started for the sake of vainglory, and to win the plaudits of the plebs, while I have known a Carrier who, without this stimulant, is reported to have eaten at a single sitting two one-year old beavers, four large bull trout and eleven white-fish, after which he excused himself for his moderation by remarking that he would probably have done better had he started with some appetite.

I remember also a full grown black bear the meat of which somehow disappeared in two days among my three companions, my own share being insignificant and hardly worth mentioning compared to theirs. An animal of that size must weigh at the very least 350 pounds in the skin.

That these absorbing faculties are not confined to one tribe or to the representatives of one sex is made evident by the fact that an Apache woman is on record who, after receiving her Government rations for the week, consumed all of the food in a single meal<sup>2</sup>.

All the Dénés, in fact, are great gormandizers. They are especially fond of solid fat, and will drink grease to surfeiting. Though they generally appreciate quantity at the expense of quality, they are not without realizing what is best for gastronomic purposes. The tongues, ears and heart of any animal are particularly prized; the marrow is also a rare tid-bit to them. But it may be said that the choice morsel is in the cariboo the hump-like fat between the shoulders. In other game they relish above all the saddle of the deer, the upper lip of the moose, the liver of the marmot, the cutlets of the bear, and the tail of the beaver. This last is especially appreciated in the west, as is also the corresponding part in the porcupine. The serving of this to a guest is deemed a genuine mark of consideration. The gelatinous substance of a beaver tail will suit the palate of many; but, personally, my experience of porcupine tails is not in their favour.

However little delicate the Dénés may be in their diet and easily pleased as they are with the degree of cleanliness which accompanies the preparation of their food, they will never stoop to eating on the bare ground. The repast is served on mats, if any are procurable, or an old skin, rough canvas, pieces of gunny sacks, or even a blanket. The entire *menu* is spread thereon, if solid; if not, it is left in the kettle or put in a large dish which is placed in the middle, and each guest helps himself therefrom, or is served in a small bark vessel.

<sup>1</sup> "A Journey round the World", vol. II, p. 309.

<sup>2</sup> Fourteenth Annual Rep. Bur. of Ethnology, p. 287.

Spoons and ladles, when of aboriginal manufacture, are of wood or mountain sheep horn, according to the habitat of the tribe. In the far east some are also of musk-ox horn.

The guests sit or squat round the spread, the highest in rank or consideration being placed just opposite the doorway. No women eat with the men. They have their meal either separately, though simultaneously, in some corner near the door, or more often still they eat after the men. If the repast partakes at all of a ceremonial character, the host or hosts never dream of sharing it with the guests. Their proper rôle is then to serve the latter, standing and as obsequious as possible. In family affairs the men are served by the women.

### Food Preserving.

Though, in common with all American aborigines, the Dénés are noted for their improvidence, when luck has favoured them and they have brought home several heads of large game, they take the necessary steps towards preserving for future needs the meat they cannot consume within a few days. The process is very simple. The meat is cut up by the women in very long slices, which are left to dry over the transversal poles of a rough scaffolding, under which burns a slow fire. Sometimes the rays of the sun and the action of the air suffice for the success of the operation. At times also, when the requirements of travelling do not allow of any stay on the way, the meat slices are added to the load of the women, on the outside, and left to dry slowly as the band moves about.

This preserved meat is very substantial, and it will keep for any length of time. But for unconquerable toughness I would commend *cascamet*, or dried beaver meat. This is coal black, and even after long boiling it needs the sharp teeth of an Indian to crush and masticate it.

Of more easy comestion and rather pleasant to the taste was the well known pemmican. This consisted in the lean part of the meat thoroughly dried in the usual way and then pounded between two stones on a dressed skin. When in its original state this did not contain any fat or seasoning of any kind. Most of what I have seen of it belonged to that class. But the early traders, to render it at the same time more palatable and serviceable, after obtaining it from the Indians in the shape of a fine powdered meat, completed the process by adding fat thereto and sewing it up in bags of undressed hide with the hairy side out.

A superior pemmican was obtained by mixing the meat dust with marrow and dried service berries. Loose pemmican sweetened with sugar is still occasionally made by the mountain tribes.

We have referred above to salmon oil. It is obtained by cutting off the heads of the fish, which are deposited in the shallow water of the lakes, spitted through by long willow twigs to keep them together. There they are

left for the space of a few weeks, sometimes a full month, until they reach the proper stage of semi-putrefaction. They are then exposed to the rays of the sun to provide for the evaporation of the water they have absorbed, after which their oil is extracted by means of heated stones laid over them in long bark vessels. This they finally collect in salmon skin bags, thus securing what is to them a luxury, but to us an unspeakable abomination.

In the east some sort of lamp oil is also made with the heads and entrails of the white-fish.

Once salmon has been deprived of its head, it is cured by being first opened and left hanging by the tail end to dry. Then both sides are internally cut lengthwise from the spine almost to the initial point of opening, so as to double the width of the fish. After it has been further scarified or furrowed with a sharp knife, which was originally of peculiar form, the resulting thin and very broad slice is spread out and so kept by means of wooden pins thrust therein sidewise. Being finally hung up as before, it is left to dry in the smoke of a small fire.

Smaller fish, like some carpoids which are scooped out by the thousand in a few localities, are similarly treated, save that their drying is left solely to the action of air and sun heat. As to the white-fish, it is more esteemed when kept frozen. If needed for immediate consumption, its surface is thawed out, when its scaly skin peels off almost in a single piece.

### Drinking.

Eating implies drinking. As is well known, excesses in the latter are certainly as common and as prejudicial to health and morals as the former. Drinking to excess, however, is a disorder which must be charged to our civilization, inasmuch as the northlanders had originally no knowledge of the power of fermentation over liquids<sup>1</sup>.

Before the advent of the whites, the Dénés hardly ever used any other beverage than cold water, except in cases of illness, real or imaginary. They found a plentiful supply of it almost anywhere and at any time, though in the winter they had often to melt snow balls by the fireside. If their camp was situated near a stream or lake, it was (and has remained) the business of the women to go early in the morning and break with a cariboo horn shoot the new coat of ice formed during the preceding night over the family ice-hole. A bat-like implement is then used to scoop out the pieces of ice.

The Indians did not drink much, unless fish was their daily food. Harmon says of the Carriers that "they will sometimes swallow at one draught three

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<sup>1</sup> But in the south the Apaches made out of corn crushed and soaked in water an intoxicant which was called "tiswin" and highly pleased the native palate. Cf. "Geronimo's Story of his Life", by S. M. Barrett, p. 22. New York, 1906.

pints or three quarts"<sup>1</sup>. But when the same aborigines made their meals on boiled fish, they very generally used the broth as a beverage, and to this day they have remained quite partial to it.

Then, either as a common drink or in the guise of medicinal potions, they had often recourse to decoctions of some plants or herbs. Almost any one would suit them: the stronger tasted the better. On that account wild mint (*Mentha Canadensis*) was, and is to-day, in great demand for that purpose. Later on, probably as a result of intercourse with the whites, they took to potions of Labrador tea (*Ledum palustre*). They now use it rather extensively when short of the imported article.

As to spirituous liquors, the northern Dénés have been represented as forming by their repulsion therefor a pleasant contrast with their neighbours of Algonquin descent. The truth is that they share with all inferior races a pronounced appetite for anything that acts strenuously on their system and a regrettable lack of control over themselves when the first fumes of strong drinks are felt. If early authors compare them so favourably with other aboriginal races in this respect, it is simply because distance kept the curse of intoxicants longer away from them than was the case with Indians nearer to the dispensers of the baneful fluid.

Harmon initiates us to the very first drinking bout witnessed by the western Dénés and the impression it made on them. In view of the respective social position and unequal degree of enlightenment of the two races, his simple narrative makes pathetic reading.

*"Tuesday, January 1, 1811. — This being the first day of another year, our people have passed it, according to the custom of the Canadians, in drinking and fighting. Some of the principal Indians of this place desired us to allow them to remain at the fort, that they might see our people drink. As soon as they began to be a little intoxicated and to quarrel among themselves, the Natives began to be apprehensive that something unpleasant might befall (sic) them also. They, therefore, hid themselves under the beds and elsewhere, saying that they thought the white people had run mad, for they appeared not to know what they were about. They perceived that those who were the most beastly in the early part of the day became the most quiet in the latter part, in view of which they exclaimed 'the senses of the white people have returned to them again', and they appeared not a little surprised at the change; for, it was the first time that they had ever seen a person intoxicated"*<sup>2</sup>.

The eastern Dénés had not been left so long uncontaminated by the plague. So keen was, at the end of the eighteenth century and the two first decades of the nineteenth, the competition between the representatives of

<sup>1</sup> "An Account of the Indians on the E. side of the R. M.", p. 284.

<sup>2</sup> Journal, p. 162.

rival companies that they stooped to the vilest means to increase their clientèle. As a result, the meeting of the native hunters with the traders was, as Franklin remarks, "generally a scene of much riot and confusion, as the hunters receive such quantities of spirits as keep them in a state of intoxication for several days"<sup>1</sup>.

Later on, when the infamous traffic was partially discontinued, the attachment of the Chippewayans, for instance, to the poisonous beverage "remained so strong that, every season, parties of the tribe traversed the continent to Churchill on Hudson's Bay, with no other purpose than to obtain it"<sup>2</sup>.

### **Smoking and Snuffing.**

When I first wrote<sup>3</sup> that smoking was originally unknown to the northern Dénés, my remarks seemed to elicit incredulous comment in some quarters. Many aboriginal tribes had, even in prehistoric times, some sort of substitute for our tobacco. In fact, the calumet or peace pipe has become in the popular mind inseparably connected with the make up of the American Indian. Yet, as I wrote some twenty years ago, the very act of smoking was unknown to the Sékanais and the Carriers prior to 1792 and 1793 respectively. When I penned that statement, I was simply repeating the emphatic declarations of my native informants, and had not as yet read Mackenzie's account of the eastern Dénés, Slaves and Dog-Ribs, whom he was the first white man to visit. This was in the summer of 1789, and the explorer explicitly states that "it was evident they did not know the use of tobacco".

When this was first proffered to the Carriers of Stuart Lake, as late as 1806, those Indians were still so ignorant of its nature that they tasted it as one would a piece of food and, finding it too bitter, they threw it away. Then to show its use the white men lighted their pipes, when, at the sight of the smoke issuing from their mouths, the benighted Carriers wondered if the strangers did not hail from the land of the ghosts<sup>4</sup>.

Soon, however, they took to smoking, making to themselves pipes like that of fig. 25, generally of serpentine or any other analogous material. Owing to its exhilarating influence over the nerves, tobacco became a great favourite with all the tribes. To-day men, women and children from fourteen or fifteen smoke in the north. In fact, the Indians may go fasting for a number of days at a time, but they must have their pipe.

When tobacco cannot be had, they use dried kinnikinik leaves, and many women usually mix them with the imported article, even when there is no dearth of the same. In the east the inner bark of a viburnum (*V. oxycoccus* according to Petitot) serves a like purpose.

<sup>1</sup> "Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea", vol. II, p. 49.

<sup>2</sup> Th. Simpson's "Narrative", p. 73.

<sup>3</sup> "Notes on the Western Dénés" p. 36.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. my "History of the Northern Interior of British Columbia", p. 62 of third edition.

In the south, both Apaches and Navahoës smoke only cigarettes. They never cultivated tobacco, but found it growing wild. The latter even claim to be acquainted with four different varieties of the weed. The Apache cigarettes were made in by-gone days by rolling the native tobacco in wrappers of oak leaves, and according to the old warrior Geronimo, though both men and women smoke from time immemorial, no boy was allowed the privilege before he had hunted alone and killed large game. Unmarried women are not forbidden the use of tobacco, but smoking is considered an act of forwardness and immodesty on their part<sup>1</sup>.

As to the Navahoës, they say that they formerly made use of *terra cotta* pipes, and their legends repeatedly mention such a form of smoking.

The charm the natives find in tobacco is the same

which renders them so fond of intoxicants. They are as much the slaves of the one as they would be of the other, were

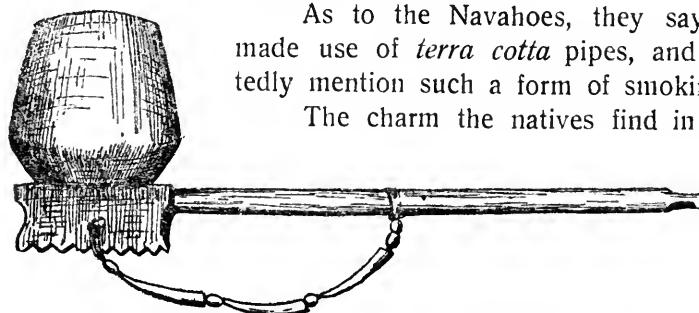


Fig. 25.

they not debarred by law and other circumstances from indulging in the latter as they are left free to enjoy the former.

The Russians, it hardly needs be recalled, are great smokers, nor do they despise snuff. Hence both forms of the soothing weed were early introduced by them on the northwest coast of America, indirectly at first through the aborigines of Siberia, and then directly in the course of their own cruises to what is now Alaska. The result is that the Dénés of the lower Yukon not only smoke, but are addicted to the use of snuff as well.

When the latter is wanting, they make some themselves by grinding up tobacco in small bowls, sometimes prettily decorated and provided with two ears or handles. This bowl or cup is then held in the left hand, while the right grasps a stout round stick, the top of which is weighted with a stone. They have small oval snuff-boxes of wood or bone, and sniff the powdered tobacco into their nostrils through a small wooden tube.

Both Dall and Wlymper mention snuff in connection with the so-called Ingaliks. The use of it has not penetrated into the interior. But tobacco chewing is another custom due to the whites, which was readily acclimatized in the north. Gum chewing, however, was and remains a favourite pastime with both sexes, especially the women.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. "Geronimo's Story of his Life", p. 21.

## CHAPTER XI.

**Hunting.****A Criterion of Tribal Status.**

The vocabulary of a people may be regarded as a safe guide to its social status and the nature of its chief pursuit. It is a sort of registering instrument whose readings are seldom at variance with fact. When it records, for instance, a multitude of fish names, or, better still, when it possesses several names for the same fish according to its age or condition, it will infallibly denote a nation of fishermen.

In like manner, a superabundance of words expressive of fine distinctions in the classification of the larger land animals will inevitably betray a race of hunters. This is so true that, for instance, the semi-sedentary Carriers, whose staple food is salmon, have to borrow from the vocabulary of the nomadic Sékanais several of their terms to designate the various stages in the growth of cariboo, while their dialect is exceedingly rich in words denotive of salmon under all possible aspects<sup>1</sup>.

Even the western Nahanaïs are more hunters than fishermen, and their habitat is, moreover, remarkably high and mountainous. No wonder, then, if they differentiate with such scrupulous precision the representatives of such an apparently insignificant rodent as the marmot. With them the generic name of that animal is *tætiyé*. The female is called *hosthel*, while the male is known as *æt'qé-tha*. A little marmot in general is named *æ'kane*, or *usthé-tsétle*; but if it is one year old, it goes as *usaze*. The next year it will be known as *ækhetze*, and when in its third year, it will be called *tætiyé-tucítze*. And note that all of those eight words apply to only one kind of animal, since there is another term to denote the smaller variety of marmot (*Arctomys monax*).

The Nahanaïs are therefore stamped by their very vocabulary as a horde of trappers and huntsmen, and the abundance of their terms for a mountain animal furthermore throws a significant light on the topography of their country.

So is it with their eastern congeners, the Hares, Dog-Ribs and other Barren Grounds Dénés. We know already that reindeer is their staff of life. Let us now see how their dialects are affected by that circumstance.

In the vicinity of Great Bear Lake the natives call that animal *etie*, food, or *natle*, the swift-footed one; but large migrating herds of the same receive the name of *nonteli*, the vagabonds, the nomads. When of an abnormally small size and with a whitish coat, that game is called *yarikai*, the little white one. The male in general is known as *detsô*, and the female as *bedzi*. But

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<sup>1</sup> See beginning of next chapter.

if the former is exceptionally fat, it is denominated *'tetségé*. The fawn is *tsie*, or the squaller, to the same people, and before it acquires the long hair proper to its older fellows, it goes by the name of *tsiedékfwé*, by allusion to a duckling just hatched.

A male with renascent antlers is known as *bedzitco-halleli*. A female without antlers is called either *ranakfwi* or *rayanakfwi*, while she assumes the name of *tadeya*, little buttons, as soon as these begin to grow again. If simply pregnant, she becomes *edeyan* to the natives; if fat and in the same condition, she is *tconkota*, but if lean and pregnant she is called *tcontsethe*. *Etinnarai* is a fawnless female, and *beyarettie* denotes one with a fawn, while a female whose neck is stripped of its hair by the rutting male goes under the name of *'kol'ta-etsie*, or worn out mantlet.

Here we have, therefore, no less than nineteen words to designate the same animal. Conclusion: the tribes whose vocabulary is so rich in this particular can be nothing else than professional hunters.

### The Fur-bearing Game of the Dénés.

Game is distinguished into venison and fur-bearing animals. We are already acquainted with the former; a brief list of the latter must comprise the following:

The beaver (*Castor fiber*, Linn.), which, owing to its economic importance, is known to all the tribes by a monosyllabic root, *tsa*, as a rule, but sometimes also *tse*, *tsi* or *tsu*, according to the tribes. Useless to insist on the industrious habits and quasi-human intelligence of this rodent. Its great value in the eyes of the natives rests especially on the permanency of its haunts and the sedentariness of its life, which make it an unfailing asset to the natives in time of need. Its small congener, the musk-rat (*Fiber zibethicus*, Linn.), is the beaver of the children, the women and the orphans.

The bear shares with the beaver the honour of being called by a radical monosyllable denotive of its importance in aboriginal economy, *sas*, *sæs* or *sa*. By these terms they mean the black bear (*Ursus Americanus*), and a brownish variety of the same. A variety, I say; for this must not be confounded with the genuine cinnamon bear (*U. arctos*), which is wanting in the fauna of the north. Both black and brown cubs are liable to be found in the same litter. The Dénés, who generally prove so cowardly against a human enemy, are so courageous when matched with almost any wild beast that among them he would not be considered a man who would be afraid of a bear<sup>1</sup>. Personal encounters wherein Bruin comes out second best are

<sup>1</sup> It is no doubt owing to this circumstance that Dr. R. King had such a poor idea of the fighting powers of our bears. That traveller goes to the length of writing that even "the grisly bear . . . and the *ursus maritimus* or polar bear . . . are likewise inoffensive if not provoked" ("Narrative of a Journey to the Shores of the Arctic Ocean", vol. II, p. 153). But I happen

by no means rare occurrences, and not a few Carriers, for instance, bear the marks of its teeth and claws. True, they will never purposely seek the terrible grizzly (*U. horribilis*), unless impelled by a spirit of revenge for the death of some friend at its hands. Yet, I know an Indian who, when a mere youth (ignorance is bliss!) killed one with a revolver; and another who, by his fearlessness and *sang-froid*, put to flight a bear of that species with which he had been sitting face to face for quite a while<sup>1</sup>. The main point in such awkward circumstances is not to betray the least fear, and to look one's adversary right in the eyes. Show any degree of hesitation and you are lost.

As a rule, if they perceive the animal in time, they will rather avoid it by a prudent circuit than court a too close acquaintance with it. During my twenty-five years stay in the north, I have known of two Sékanais and one Carrier who fell victims to its merciless claws and teeth, and of another who was so belaboured by the enraged beast he had mortally wounded, that he was left for dead.

Bodily struggles with such monsters are out of the question. In cases of encounters with wounded or nursing black bears, the only kinds that are really dangerous, an absolute requisite for personal safety is to seize them by the ears and keep them as far as possible from one's face and throat, tactics with which every Déné hunter is familiar.

The Barren Ground bear (*U. Richardsonii*), without being as plentiful as the black species, is nevertheless found in the east, and stray specimens of the polar or white bear (*Thalassarctos maritimus*, Linn.) occasionally wander off to the confines of the northernmost Dénés' territory.

The other fur-bearing animals sought after in the north are the marten (*Mustela martes*, Rich.), the fisher (*M. Canadensis*), the lynx (*Felis Cana*-

to know personally that the former will almost invariably attack man without any provocation, and cases of mortal encounters with simple black bears are also on record.

<sup>1</sup> It is but right to remark that W. H. Dall calls our grizzly "the large brown bear of the mountains, known as 'grizzly' among the Hudson Bay voyageurs" ("Travels on the Yukon", p. 133). If the animal be not the genuine grizzly, what is its scientific name? It is not the *U. arctos*, which is not found in America, nor the *U. Richardsonii*, whose habitat is east of the Rocky Mountains. Moreover, Dall admits almost in the same breadth that our grizzly "sometimes reaches a length of nine feet with a girth nearly as great" (*Ibid.*), a pretty good size, I should say, for a brown bear that is not a grizzly. In the work of Captain Back, who was with Dr. R. King in the overland journey, the incidents of which both have related in interesting books, Richardson shares so little the latter's naive opinion as to the inoffensiveness of that animal and Mr. Dall's scepticism concerning its identity with the grizzly bear, that he styles it *Ursus ferox*, calls it expressly grisly and says of it that "it is the most powerful of the genus, being able to master the American bison, which forms its habitual prey. The Indian hunter will rarely venture to attack the grisly bear unless he is very advantageously posted; for it does not hesitate to assail a man who, intruding incautiously upon its haunts, comes upon it unexpectedly; and has been known to carry off a voyager from among his companions as they were seated at supper" ("Narrative of the Arctic Land Expedition to the Mouth of the Great Fish River", p. 488).

*densis*, Rich.), the fox (*Vulpes vulgaris*), and two small carnivores, the ermine (*Putorius vulgaris*, Linn.), and the mink (*P. vison*, Brisson). Wolves (*Canis lupus occidentalis*) and coyotes (*C. latrans*) are also caught, generally in traps set for other game. Rather too seldom a few wolverines (*Gulo luscus*, Linn.) fall victims to their curiosity and those marauding propensities which render them veritable curses to the poor trapper whom they despoil of the fruits of his exertions.

The capture of the silver fox — which is considered by the natives a mere variety of the vulpine species — is especially welcome to the modern Dénés, on account of the great commercial value of its fur.

### Modes of Hunting.

Among the Dénés the pursuit of game may take at least seven different forms. There is occasional shooting, hunting for hidden animals, chasing, impounding, decoying, snaring and trapping.

It is fairly common to come across Nemrods of our own race who sneer at the marksmanship of the natives. Caspar Whitney goes even so far as to declare that the Dénés he met "can hardly hit a barn door a hundred yards off"<sup>1</sup>. If this be a fact as regards his own companions, he must have purposely chosen stupid or half-blind fellows, in order that he might the better show his own superiority in the use of the rifle. My experience with their western congeners would rather be to the contrary. As I write this, I remember well my surprise at the extraordinary success of a member of my crew who was shooting down one after another rabbits that we would raise in the thickets, bordering a rapid stream which we were descending at an almost vertiginous speed. Dropping his paddle in the canoe, seizing his gun and firing as we drifted along, apparently before he had time to take aim, was the work of but a few seconds. Yet his ammunition was seldom wasted.

They are likewise expert in bringing down aquatic fowl on the wing.

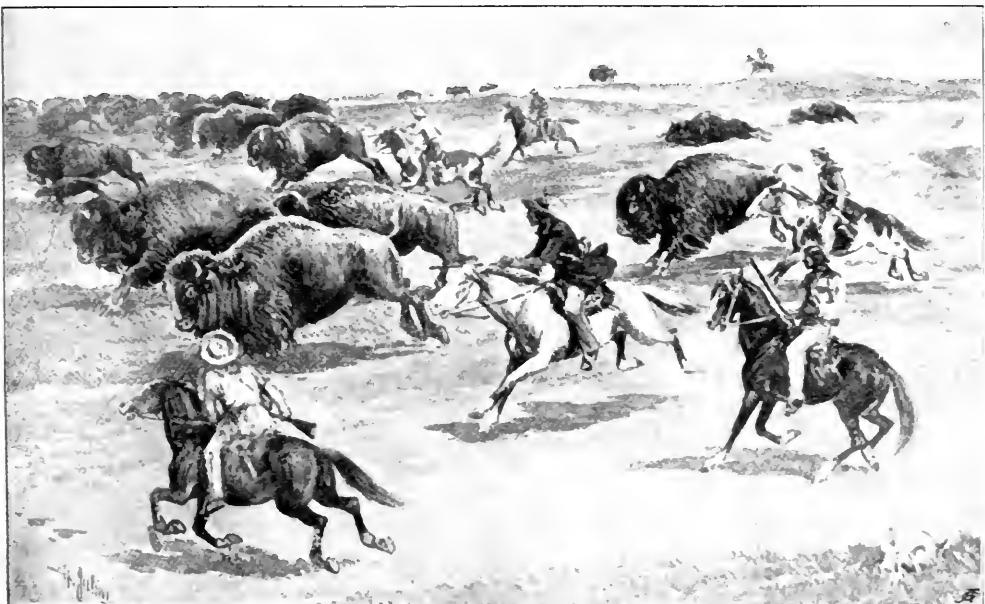
As they never travel without being armed and are constantly on the look out for game, it follows that occasions to show their skill with fire-arms are not infrequent. As to their success with the bow and arrows and their peculiar way of using the same, the reader will have to wait until we treat of their wars and offensive weapons. Meanwhile, let it suffice to remark that those primitive arms were much more effective even against large animals than would appear to the average reader.

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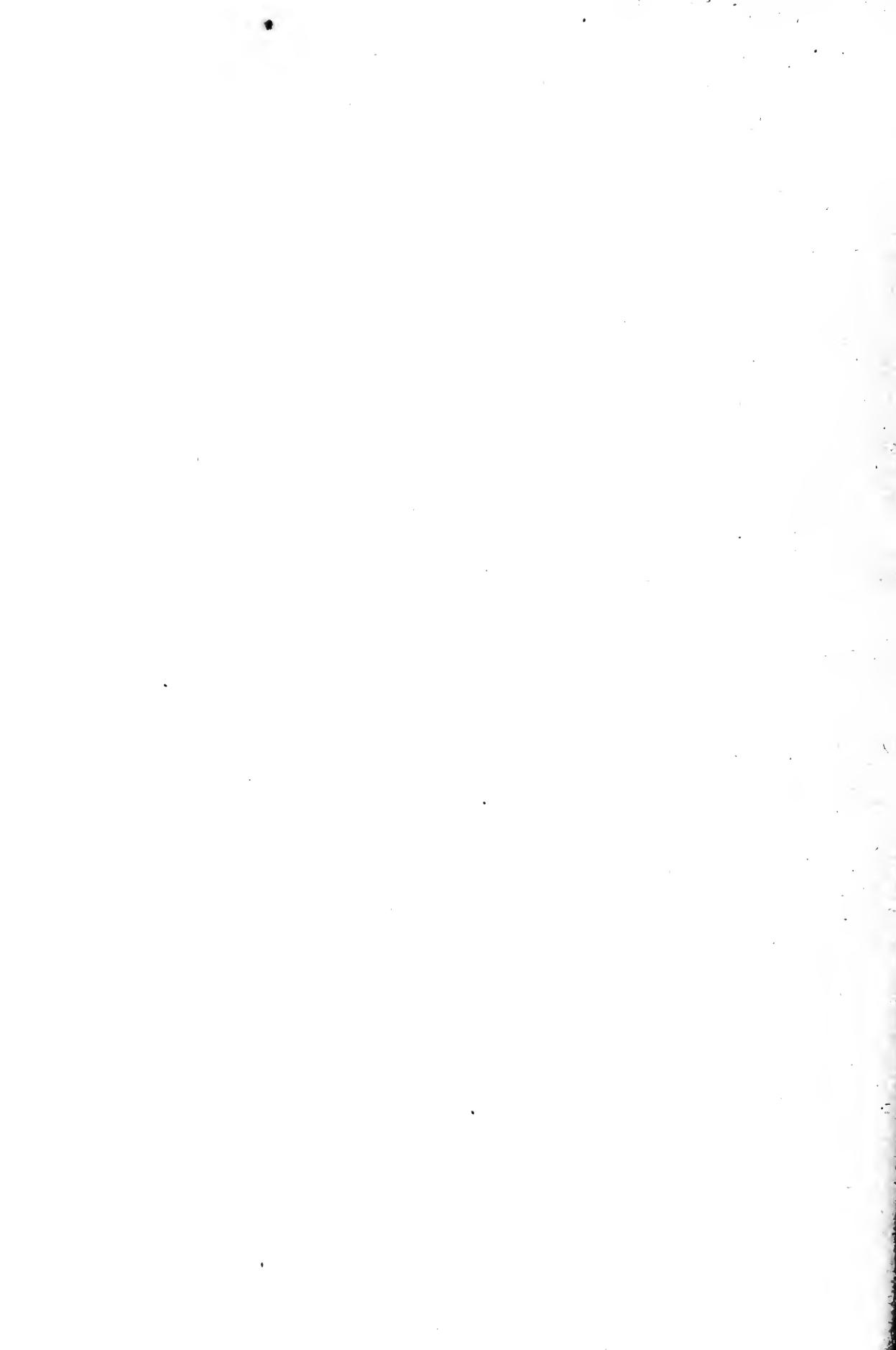
<sup>1</sup> "On Snow-shoes to the Barren Grounds", p. 134. Hearne writes in this connection: "The Indians are far more expert in killing geese, as well as any other species of game, than any European I ever saw in Hudson's Bay; for some of them frequently kill upward of a hundred geese in a day, whereas the most expert of the English think it a good day's work to kill thirty" (*Op. cit.*, pp. 441—42). Hearne passed many years of his life in continual contact with the Indians, and ought to know as much of their shooting capacities as an author who spent but a season among them.



The Results of a Buffalo Pound as seen to-day.



A Buffalo Hunt.



At times, the rôle of the hunter will be reduced to finding and slyly dispatching a practically helpless victim, as is the case with hibernating bears. If the animal be of the smaller or black species, it is generally dislodged from its lair by specially trained dogs acting as ferrets, and then killed with any weapon at hand. Many a valuable hound, however, has found death in the sombre recesses of bears' retreats, thus paying for his audacity with his life.

But it sometimes happens that Bruin stubbornly refuses to be forced out of its refuge by humbler animals, which it can so easily lay low. The action of fire and smoke is then resorted to, always with the most satisfactory results. When the game is a grizzly, the Indians must have recourse to some stratagem, in order to protect their own lives against its well known ferocity. "After discovering its lair, the natives carefully measure its opening. Timbers of the requisite length, and from four to six inches in diameter, are carefully cut, and carried to the vicinity. During the day, when the bear is known to have returned to the cave, the Indians collect in large numbers, and approach with the utmost quietness, each carrying a timber or a large stone. The timbers are then fitted into the mouth of the den, forming a barricade, and stones in large numbers are piled against them, only leaving an opening about a foot square. Burning brands are then thrown in to arouse the animal, who puts its head out of the opening, which is too small for egress. A volley of balls soon puts an end to its existence"<sup>1</sup>.

Such are the precautions with which, according to Dall himself, whole bands of Indians approach "brown" bears, even when captive.

### The Chase.

Chasing large game, cariboo, moose, deer or bears, is also a frequent occupation of the Dénés. Their power of endurance on these occasions is truly wonderful. Over the hard snow of the late winter, they glide with astonishing velocity by mount and vale, at times using their snow-shoes as regular skates over which they rush down the declivities of their hilly country, and finally catch up with the game.

In mid-winter, hunting moose or other venison game over deep snow freshly fallen is considered child's play by our people. Its tracks are immediately detected and easily followed, while its escape is hardly possible owing to the great weight of its body, which makes it sink uncomfortably at every step, when it soon becomes tired out and practically helpless against its better equipped pursuer. Moose or cariboo will sometimes show fight under these circumstances; but it is no match for the wily aborigine.

During the summer, moose and deer are occasionally chased over the water. Mounting their light canoes, the natives then feel so sure of their prey that they will not waste their ammunition on them. They soon overtake the

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<sup>1</sup> "Travels on the Yukon", pp. 133—34.

game and manœuvre around it until it is exhausted, when they stealthily approach and stab it in the heart or loins<sup>1</sup>.

According to an old trader, George Keith, after whom one of the immense bays of Great Bear Lake is named, the most successful months for the chase are, in the latitude of that inland sea, those of April, August and the beginning of September; the first on account of the quantity of snow on the ground, which enables the native to fatigue the game by pursuit, and because the last is the month during which, the horse-fly being most prevalent, droves of reindeer are forced to take shelter in the lakes, that they may avoid the attacks of those insects<sup>2</sup>.

East of the Rocky Mountains, the task of the hunter is somewhat less arduous, owing to the greater gregariousness of the object of his chase. When he lies in wait for the passage of the reindeer or he is in pursuit of the same, he can usually manage to lay down many heads. Then the most indiscriminate slaughter takes place, as the Dénés advance in bands who spear or shoot hundreds merely for their tongues, leaving their carcasses to rot where they have fallen. Even calves are killed for no other reason than to gratify the northlander's lust for destruction.

This is one of his defects, and it is common to all the tribes. Even when wallowing in abundance, the Déné cannot see any game without at once becoming possessed of an uncontrollable desire to lay it low. Most authors have noticed this foible of his, from Hearne<sup>3</sup>, to Dall<sup>4</sup>, and Whitney<sup>5</sup>. The Chippewayans are especially famed for their prowess in the field<sup>6</sup>, and even of the less sturdy Hares Petitot says that one of their men will occasionally kill forty Barren Ground cariboo per day<sup>7</sup>.

### Impounding.

It goes without saying that such success can generally be achieved only at the time of the periodical migration of the reindeer, when its herds are immensely large. If less numerous, the northern Dénés have recourse to a contrivance which often yields as satisfactory results. I mean pounds, or very

<sup>1</sup> "I was told by one of my interpreters who had often traded among them [the middle Yukon Loucheux], and was well acquainted with their habits and customs, that these Ayans (and in fact several tribes below them on the river) do not hesitate to jump on the animals back in the lake or river, leaving the canoe to look after itself, and dispatch the brute with a hand knife, cutting its throat or stabbing it in the neck" (Fred. Schwatka, "Along Alaska's Great River", p. 232).

<sup>2</sup> In Masson's *Les Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest*, vol. II, pp. 117—18. Quebec, 1890. Keith wrote in 1812.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 117—18.

<sup>4</sup> "Travels on the Yukon", p. 135.

<sup>5</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 183.

<sup>6</sup> J. McLean's "Twenty-five Years' Service in the H. B. Territories", vol. I, p. 227.

<sup>7</sup> *Exploration de la Région du Grand Lac des Ours*, p. 133.

large corrals, wherein they drive and finally butcher the game. Hearne's description of some he saw merits reproduction.

"When the Indians design to impound deer", he writes, "they look out for one of the paths in which a number of them have trod, and which is observed to be still frequented by them. When these paths cross a lake, a wide river, or a barren plain, they are found to be much the best for the purpose; and if the path run through a cluster of woods, capable of affording materials for building the pound, it adds considerably to the commodiousness of the situation. The pound is built by making a strong fence with bushy trees, without observing any degree of regularity, and the work is continued to any extent, according to the pleasure of the builders. I have seen some that were not less than a mile round, and am informed that there are others still more extensive. The door, or entrance of the pound, is not larger than a common gate, and the inside is so crowded with small counter-hedges as very much to resemble a maze; in every opening of which they set a snare, made with thongs of parchment deer-skins well twisted together, which are amazingly strong. One end of the snare is usually made fast to a growing pole; but if no one of a sufficient size can be found near the place where the snare is set, a loose pole is substituted in its room, which is always of such size and length that a deer cannot drag it before it gets entangled among the other wood, which is all left standing except what is found necessary for making the fence, hedges, etc.

"The pound being thus prepared, a row of small brushwood is stuck up in the snow on each side the door or entrance; and these hedge-rows are continued along the open part of the lake, river, or plain, where neither stick nor stump besides is to be seen, which makes them the more distinctly observed. These poles, or brush-wood, are generally placed at the distance of fifteen or twenty yards from each other, and ranged in such a manner as to form two sides of a long acute angle, growing gradually wider in proportion to the distance they extend from the entrance of the pound, which sometimes is not less than two or three miles; while the deer's path is exactly along the middle, between the two rows of brush-wood.

"Indians employed on this service always pitch their tent on or near to an eminence that affords a commanding prospect of the path leading to the pound; and when they see any deer going that way, men, women, and children walk along the lake or river-side under cover of the woods, till they get behind them, then step forth to open view, and proceed towards the pound in the form of a crescent. The poor timorous deer finding themselves pursued, and at the same time taking the two rows of bushy poles to be ranks of people stationed to prevent their passing on either side, run straight forward in the path till they get into the pound. The Indians then close in, and block up the entrance with some bushy trees, that have been cut down and lie at hand for the purpose. The deer being thus enclosed, the women and children

walk round the pound, to prevent them from breaking or jumping over the fence, while the men are employed spearing such as are entangled in the snares, and shooting with bows and arrows those which remain loose in the pound.

"This method of hunting, if it deserves the name, is sometimes so successful, that many families subsist by it without having occasion to move their tents above once or twice during the course of a whole winter."<sup>1</sup>

That some such way of capturing venison animals was followed in connection with the now practically extinct buffalo can be gathered from the accompanying illustration. No words of mine could more adequately describe the terrible havoc played among the great herds of that former king of the plains through the instrumentality of those destructive contrivances. Our photograph represents a corner of the Canadian prairies strewn with the bones of buffaloes slaughtered in one of the very last pounds erected by the Indians. A similar device is also resorted to by the Dénés of Alaska.

### Decoying.

If alone or in solitary groups, the deer is generally as coy and shy as it is gentle and confiding when in large numbers, especially at certain seasons, when its sight is defective. The native huntsman must then have recourse to stratagem in order to entice it within shooting distance. This almost invariably consists in donning the spoils of the animal with its antlers, and imitating the bearing and actions of the live deer. As a further decoy the Hare Indians use bunches of hoofs of the same animal, which they carry about suspended to their belts by means of a string. By agitating these, they draw the attention of the cariboo which, startled at first, stop in their course and soon come to investigate, with the result that they pay for their curiosity with their life.

One is no sooner shot down than the would-be deer moves on after the retreating band without throwing off his disguise, and by his imitation cries and the antics proper to the game he is after, he soon has them again at a standstill, when he repeats his execution in their ranks. Quite a few heads can thus be secured in succession.

The same stratagem was originally in vogue among the Hupas and other Pacific Dénés. In fact, those Indians at times simulated so well the movements of the deer that even the watchful panther was deceived and attacked the disguised hunter<sup>2</sup>. The Navahoës also wore masks with horns for decoying purposes, sometimes dressing themselves up as antelopes, sometimes like deer<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 78—80.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Goddard's "Life and Culture of the Hupa", p. 21.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. "Navaho Legends", pp. 191 and 217.

In the rutting season, the skin of a female is ordinarily chosen for that purpose. At its sight the males immediately rush to their doom. If we are to believe Petitot's informants, the question of sex formerly played such a rôle on these occasions that the girls and women thought themselves in a position to decoy the animals more readily than the men. They then used to put on a large headdress of a particular make, and succeeded by their antics to draw the deer to themselves<sup>1</sup>, a result which I leave my reader free to credit or disbelieve.

We read that in China waterfowl are caught by wading in the water up to the neck with one's head hidden in a gourd, and then seizing the birds' legs without revealing one's identity<sup>2</sup>. If the Carrier tradition is worthy of credence, some counterpart of this expedient obtained formerly in their tribe. They even go so far as to assert that people disguised with the spoils of the birds they were after would find their way to flocks of swans, whose legs they would in some way fasten to a rope, to which the fowl would find themselves retained on their first attempt to fly off.

Whatever degree of authenticity may attach itself to such traditions, we know that practically all the tribes use to this day rough, temporary structures of evergreens, loose stones, or wood, which they erect on the river or lake shores, and whence they call after geese and ducks with remarkable success. The root word '*tork*' by which the Carriers designate these small decoy-huts is in itself sufficient to attest their antiquity as adjuncts to hunting among the Dénés.

It only remains to add that our aborigines mimic to perfection the calls and cries of all kinds of game, both fowl and land animals. When elk hunting during the rutting season, that is in autumn, in addition to imitating the cry of the game, they rub the shoulder blade of an animal of that species against a tree with excellent effect.

In the far south, deer and a variety of antelope were either driven to some high, jutting mesa and forced to jump over the precipice, or, in the case of the latter animal, which though very shy is still more curious, a red handkerchief was hung up a ramrod or a stick, which lured the game within gunshot<sup>3</sup>.

### **Snaring.**

Most of the above-described methods of hunting, those at least which have for their object reindeer and moose, are in vogue chiefly among the Dénés of the far east, where the gregariousness of the game and the treeless character of the land make them almost a necessity. West of the Barren

<sup>1</sup> *Exploration de la Région du Grand Lac des Ours*, p. 378.

<sup>2</sup> *Six Légendes Américaines identifiées à l'Histoire de Moïse*, p. 741.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Geo. W. Kendall's "Narrative of an Expedition across the great South-Western Prairies", p. 100, London, 1845.

Grounds, the country is more or less heavily timbered, and to the occident of the Rocky Mountains it becomes perfectly broken and hilly. This naturally suggests snaring and trapping as the means best calculated to further the huntsman's ends. In fact, the intermediate and western Dénés might be regarded more as trappers than as hunters in the strict acceptation of the word.

By trapper, however, I do not mean, with the dictionaries, simply one whose occupation is the trapping of fur-bearing animals, but any person who seeks game by means of a mechanical appliance, be this a trap or a snare. As a matter of fact, the latter device is more generally resorted to than the

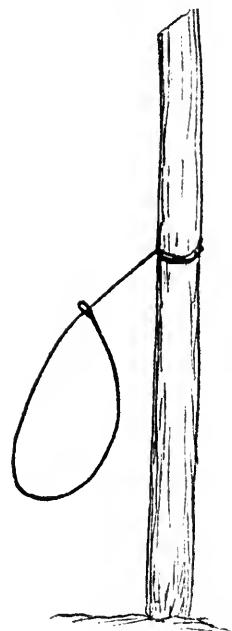


Fig. 26.

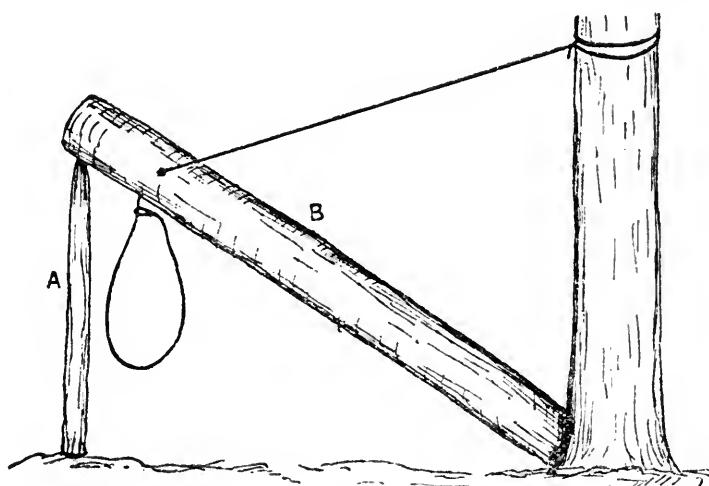


Fig. 27.

former, even by people who are usually known as trappers. In a preceding work<sup>1</sup> I have entered into full details concerning the various modes of snaring animals followed in the west. As these do not materially change with the different tribes, I must be allowed to refer to that source of information, limiting myself here to a few figures and as brief explanations as possible, consistent with intelligibility.

Fig. 26 speaks for itself. The snare therein represented is used in connection with cariboo. The Sékanais and a few other tribes of analogous habitats would set some forty or fifty such snares along the defiles or passes of their mountains, whither they drove the animals. Two of the most active hunters were deputed to watch at either end of the line, after which the main

<sup>1</sup> "Notes on the Western Dénés".

band would force the game to pass through the nooses, which would immediately contract around their necks. By scampering away, the frightened cariboo would soon see the stick attached to the snare caught in the numberless obstructions of the forest, which would cause a speedy death by suffocation.

The snare shown in fig. 27, if slightly more complicated, is none the less easy of comprehension. Its intended victims are bears.

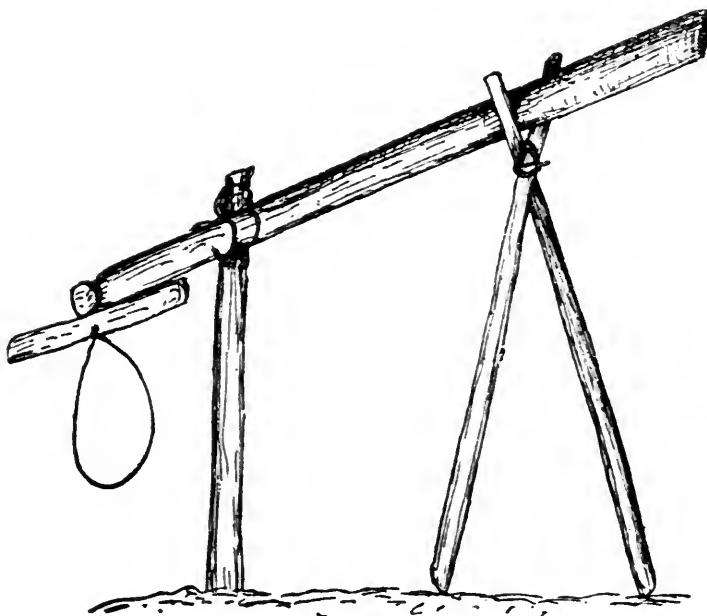


Fig. 28.

Fig. 28 has for object the same animals. That contrivance may be pointed to as evidence of no slight ingenuity or foresight. Once caught in the noose and sprung up by the fall of the forked props at the larger end of the beam,

the animal naturally struggles for a support that will annul the action of the string, with the result that its paws soon get hold of the wooden piece that slides under the smaller extremity of the fall stick or lever. By pressing down on it, the bear only hastens its own death.

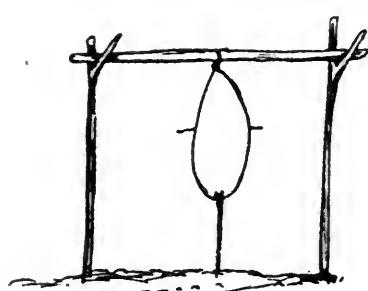


Fig. 29.

Figs. 29 and 30 represent lynx snares. To understand the working of the latter it suffices to remark that the post *a* being movable, it drops at the first movement of the game, which is thereby immediately strung up.

Snare fig. 31 is used mostly for the capture of foxes. The string above the noose is wound round a stake solidly driven in the ground and a detach-

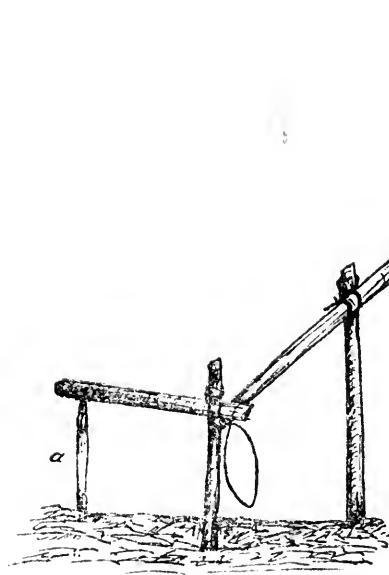


Fig. 30.

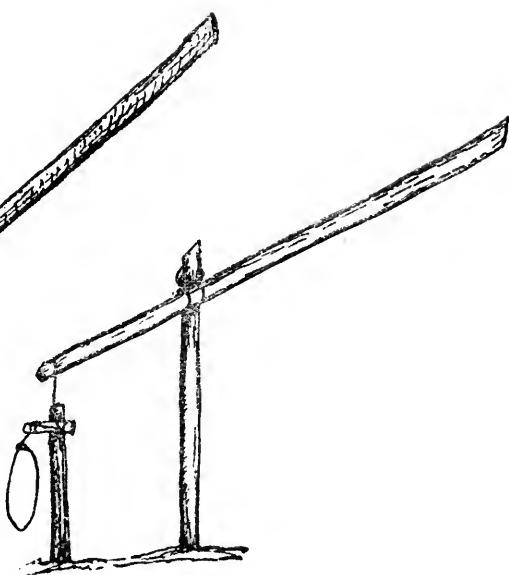


Fig. 31.

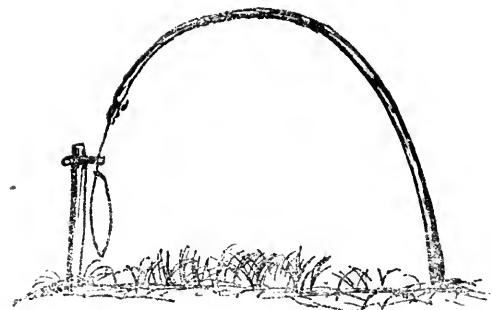


Fig. 32.

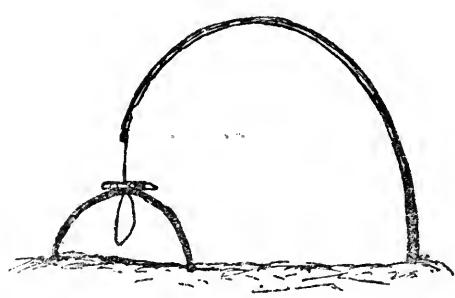


Fig. 33.

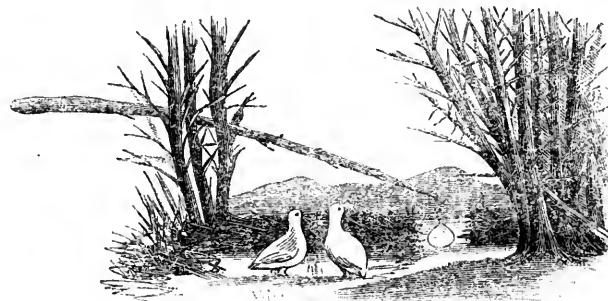


Fig. 34.

able transversal piece of wood, in such a way that it unfolds itself by the slightest attempt at escape on the part of the game.

Fig. 32 represents a marmot snare set on the same principle as the preceding.

In fig. 33 we have the rabbit snare in common use among the Carriers, wherein the springing device of the fox snare has remained practically unchanged.

Fig. 34 illustrates a Yukon grouse snare. It calls for no explanation. I have seen numbers of fool hens (*Dendragapus Franklinii*) brought down from the trees in which they were perched by simple nooses of spruce rootlets prepared on the spot, and attached at the end of long poles.

### **Beaver Hunting.**

An animal whose capture necessitates special appliances and entails clever strategical expedients, owing to its amphibious habits, is the beaver. As it has remained the chief object of our Dénés' pursuit in spite of its greatly diminished numbers, some description of the steps taken with a view to securing the same will be found acceptable.

It is during the winter months, as well as after the opening of the spring, that beaver hunting is practised on the most extensive scale. Once its lodge has been found, an indispensable preliminary to effect its capture is to discover the exact location of its path or trail under the ice. It follows well marked routes when swimming from, or returning to, its winter quarters. These our Dénés easily find out by sounding the ice in different directions with cariboo horns. Their well practised ears readily discover by a peculiar resonance of the ice where the rodent's usual path lies.

So, at a given point they cut a hole, wherein they set their babiche beaver net, attaching thereto a switch the small end of which, issuing from the water, is provided with small bells, which are the modern substitutes for the beaver nails and pebbles of a past age. Then the hunter proceeds to demolish the beaver's lodge, in order to drive it off. Should the game not be found there, the same operation is repeated at his adjoining provision store. When the undulations of the water tell of its presence, it is frightened away to where the net is set. In case it is swifter than the hunter and reaches the net before the latter, the efforts it will make to extricate itself therefrom will agitate the little bells, and the hunter will immediately make for the hole and draw it out before it has time to cut itself clear of the net.

Fig. 35 represents a bone device indispensable to the efficiency of the beaver net. It is attached to the end of the net which is laid out at the opening in the ice wherein it floats in the water. The side strings of the net are passed through the central hole of the bone piece, and thence connected with the little bells at the top of the outstanding stick, so that by pulling them up, the farthest end of the net, which is under ice, will be drawn back to where

the *mas* (or bone piece) is secured, and thereby the game will be bagged and killed on the ice.

Barbed harpoons, such as those of accompanying figure (fig. 36), which shows an old and a modern style of the same, are used when the Déné is

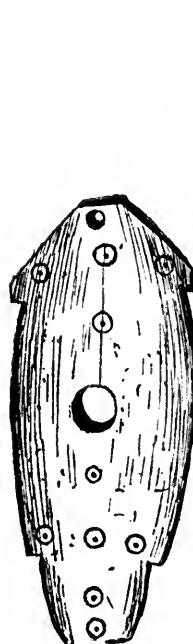


Fig. 35.



Fig. 36.



Fig. 37.

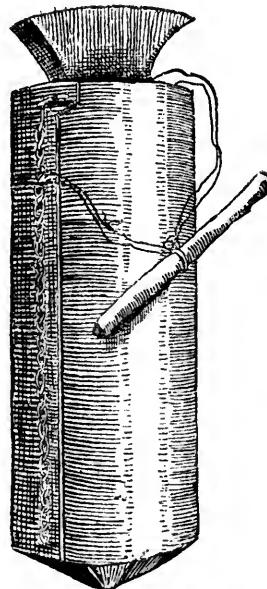


Fig. 38.

out hunting, not trapping or snaring; that is, whenever the beaver is met with free of any trap or snare. These are made of cariboo horn, though a few are now turned out of steel files or pieces of iron. They are securely fastened to a handle three or four feet long, wherewith they are launched at the game much as would be done with a regular lance. The shaft is intended to ensure greater impetus and efficiency to the weapon. Harpoons of that description are found all over North America.

When trapping for beaver, the Dénés resort to no remarkable device save that, to attract the game, they dilute the mud contiguous to the trap with pulverized castoreum which they keep in special receptacles of bone (fig. 37), or of birch bark (fig. 38). They now use for that purpose steel traps, which have entirely superseded the original wooden appliances "constructed on the lodge where the beaver appear to be most employed"<sup>1</sup>.

This naturally brings us to the question of trapping proper.

<sup>1</sup> Geo. Keith, in Masson's *Les Bourgeois de la Cie. du N.-O.*, vol. II, p. 67.

### Trapping.

Even grizzly bears were formerly killed by means of traps, huge contrivances made of green timber, in the shape of the side of a roof yielding to the action of some figure-of-four device. A Carrier is even on record as having suffered instant death by the fall of such a trap whose mechanism he was incautiously testing. Yet it may be said that more commonly martens, lynxes or foxes and marmots are the special objects of the trapper's attentions, though

not a few other kinds of fur-bearing animals will at times gladden his heart as he visits his death-dealing appliances.

The marten trap (fig. 39) consists of a low enclosure of pickets erected against, or close to, the trunk of a tree, within which the bait is secured to the end of a trap stick connected with a small upright piece, in such a way that when treading upon by the game in its attempt to get at the bait, a fall stick *a* drops on the intruder. The whole mechanism is usually hidden from view by means of dry twigs and vegetable debris, leaving out only an opening in front, which seldom fails to tempt the curiosity of the game.

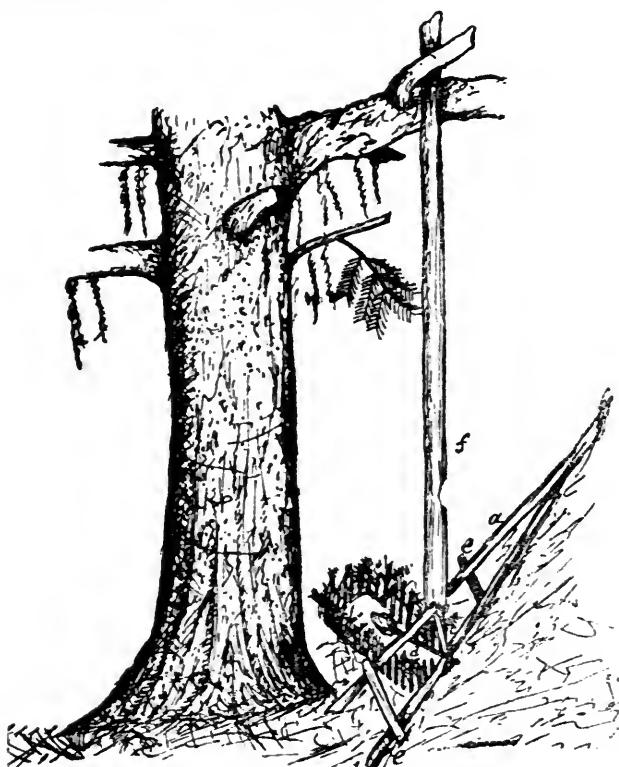


Fig. 39.

The lynx trap is more ingenious and somewhat complicated, though its working principle is analogous. The reader will not fail to notice in fig. 40 the plug-like piece of wood against which the tread stick is so arranged that the least pressure on the latter causes it to fly off, thereby releasing the whole apparatus, which then lets the oblique stick press down on the entrapped animal. Fig. 41 will still better explain the essential parts of the trap.

A third kind of trap (fig. 42) is proper to the Sékanais, who use it against marmots. It is built entirely on the figure-of-four principle, and it is a modification of the same that formerly did duty against beaver. We have its elements herewith represented (fig. 43) both separately and made ready for easy transportation.

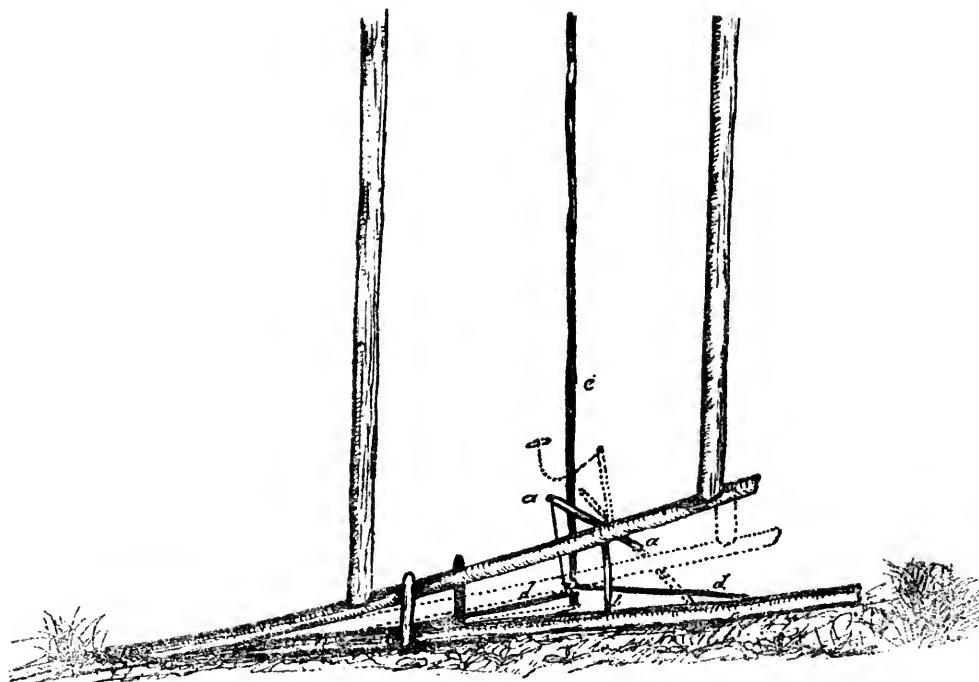


Fig. 40.



Fig. 41.

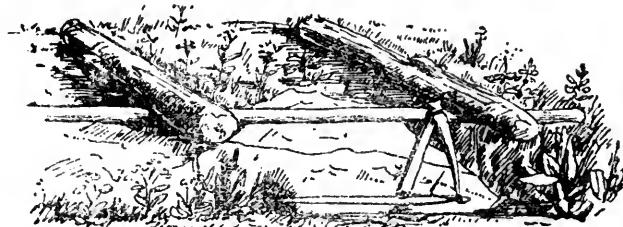


Fig. 42.

The Tscetsaut make use of a somewhat different model in connection with the same animal<sup>1</sup>.

#### Observances of the Hunter.

Fully equipped for the chase, in the glory of his bead or porcupine-quill bedecked leathern costume, the Déné hunter is a sight to behold. A decorated shot pouch, suspended through an embroidered band which crosses his breast and shoulder, has replaced the otter or marten skin quiver, which was worn

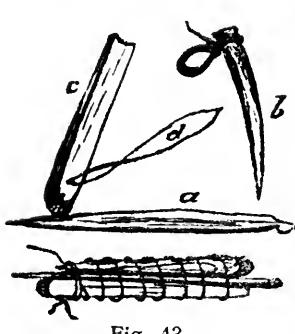


Fig. 43.

<sup>1</sup> See its detailed description in Dr. Fr. Boas: "Tenth Rep. on N. W. Tribes of Canada", pag. 42.

on the left side; a fire-bag or tobacco pouch is tucked under his girdle; a pair of gaily ornamented mittens hang from either side ready for the hands, while a long fowling piece encased in a loose fringed sheath of soft leather is held carelessly across the breast or carried over the shoulder.

But success does not depend on the costume. Therefore the hunter who knows his business will not fail to observe the many practices proper to his estate, which his forefathers have bequeathed him. In the first place, even before starting he will take a steam bath in the sudatory, some say that he may divest himself of the human odour which game scents at a distance, but just as likely in order to undergo thereby a mysterious purification which will render him agreeable to the object of his quest.

As soon as this is sighted, he will take off his hat, if in a canoe, and landing cautiously, he will lift up his hand to ascertain the direction of the breeze. By proceeding to the leeward, he will avoid being scented by the game and thus be able to approach it unawares. But his footsteps must be light, as bears especially are credited with as good a hearing as their sight is defective.

If the Déné has in contemplation an important snaring expedition after bears or other large animals, he must observe perfect continence for a full month prior to setting his snares. During that time, he cannot even drink from the same vessel as his wife, but has to use a drinking cup of his own. The second half of his preparatory month is employed in getting his snares ready.

These are made of raw moose or cariboo skin strands, four in number when intended for large game, and fewer in proportion to the presumed strength of the animals for which they are set. As a protection against moisture or any other deteriorating agent, they are in most cases wrapped with thin strips of willow bark. Hempen twine, such as is for sale at the Hudson's Bay Company posts, nowadays serves against any species of minor game.

To allure the game into his snares, the hunter formerly used to chew the root of a species of heracleum, of which the black bear is said to be very fond. Sometimes he would squirt it up with water, exclaiming at the same time: *nyûstluh!* may I snare thee!

If the Carrier Indian is to use traps instead of snares, and if smaller animals such as martens, for instance, are his intended prey, the period of abstinence from sexual intercourse is shortened to eight or ten days, during which the trapper sleeps by the fire-side, pressing a little stick down on his neck. This, of course, cannot fail to cause the fall stick of his future traps to drop on the neck of the coveted game. The chewing and squirting up of the heracleum root is still observed; but the deprecatory formula is changed to *nyûskuh!* may I entrap thee!

Once caught, the game must not be treated lightly. Bears, especially, have a right to the greatest consideration. We read that in eastern Siberia

they are sometimes "propitiated by all sorts of grimaces and obeisances"<sup>1</sup>. It is remarkable that a different observer should express himself in identical terms with regard to the Dénés of the northern American wastes. "They frequently propitiate them by speeches and ceremonies", writes Dr. R. King, "and if they succeed in slaying one, they treat it with the utmost respect, speak of it as of a relation, offer it a pipe to smoke, and generally make a speech in exculpation of the act of violence they have committed in slaying it"<sup>2</sup>.

Under no circumstance will a dog or a menstruating woman be allowed to touch it, nor will the father of twins have anything to do with it, however indirectly, as long as both of them are alive. A dog is an unclean animal, and men and women so circumstanced are likewise legally impure. Hence the fear lest the fellows of their victim be so irritated by unclean contact that in the future they should stubbornly avoid the traps or snares of the party guilty of such a slight.

As soon as game has been secured, it is not allowed to pass a night in its entirety, but must have some limb, the hind or fore paws, cut off.

If the entrapped or snared animal is a bear, the natives will be careful not to swallow its patella bone. Lest any unclean animal, dog, wolf or fox, should be tempted to defile it by contact, the hunter will see to it that it is hung up out of its reach.

Schoolcraft writes of the North American Indians in general that "it is common to preserve the head-bones and garnish them in some way as memorials of hunter triumph"<sup>3</sup>. Among the Dénés and the other aborigines that I know personally, the reason of this observance is not venatorial vainglory, but simply respect for the surviving fellows of the game dispatched, and a fear lest the bones be desecrated by unhallowed contact. In the case of a bear, those tribes simply leave its skull stuck up on the fork of a tent pole, or in the branches of a tree<sup>4</sup>.

The objects chosen as trophies are the tail of the smaller animals, such as martens, minks, and the like, and the quill feathers of the larger birds, eagles, hawks, grouse, woodpeckers, etc.

<sup>1</sup> Sir Geo. Simpson, "Narrative of a Journey round the World", vol. I, p. 266.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 168.

<sup>3</sup> "Archives of Aboriginal Knowledge", vol. III, p. 62.

<sup>4</sup> So do all the Giljaks of northeastern Asia. "Upon all sides, scattered through the woods, were skulls of bears, poised upon the stumps of small trees from four to six feet above the ground. These were intended as some kind of offering to the native gods, and, when newly placed in position (we afterward learned), were sprinkled with tobacco, berries, roots, and other articles" (Bush, "Reindeer, Dogs, and Snow-Shoes", p. 124). Bush is slightly astray when he conjectures that those objects were offered to the "native gods". Before the reader has more than half perused this work, he will be in a position to guess that they must have been offerings intended to propitiate the entire bear gens,

According to Petitot, a quite different treatment must be meted out to entrapped foxes, possibly because they belong to the category of unclean animals. The eastern Déné that would not derogate from ancestral customs, or expose himself to the danger of failure in subsequent trapping, has to empale his prey through the anal passage, and macerate its vitals and viscera with a rod. It may be, however, that regard for the integrity of its robe has something to do with this ignominious treatment.

If what was once practised in the presence of the same author may be taken as the fulfilment of a traditional prescription, an even more miserable fate awaits the wolverine which has been unlucky enough to fall into his hands. His companions skinned alive one they had taken, as the Tartars do with wolves<sup>1</sup>, after which they were so generous as to set it free, that they might have the pleasure of pursuing it with their whips.

### **Game Laws and Etiquette of the Hunter.**

As we shall see later on, the hunting grounds of most Déné tribes are parcelled out, and distributed among the principal families or clans. On the other hand, the same aborigines divide game into sedentary and nomadic animals. The former class is composed only of the beaver, and is regarded as the object of as strict proprietorship as the domestic animals or the personal chattels. No outsider can claim any right thereto. Yet when found along the public highways, such as the most important rivers or the most frequented lakes, the occasional shooting — not hunting — of beaver is not viewed in the light of a real offence. Even there, however, no trapping is permitted to others than the lawful owner of the grounds.

Should this law be transgressed, the proprietor has a right to all the beaver caught by the poacher. He will appropriate it, if he so wishes, but he must leave the trap in a conspicuous place near the spot where it was unlawfully set.

A wayfarer in distress may help himself to the flesh of any animal caught outside of his own grounds; but he must dress its fur and hand it over to the owner of the grounds on which it has been taken.

As for the nomadic animals, they belong to him whose traps or snares have been instrumental in effecting their capture. Yet, once an individual has cut out a trail or line in the woods along which to set his traps or snares, no one else has a right to hunt in it. To avoid conflicts, these hunting lines are usually traced through one's rightful preserves.

Transient game belongs by courtesy, not to the person who shoots it, but to him who sights it first.

As for the common venison or large fur-bearing animals, some have written that they are the common property of the tribe. The truth is that

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<sup>1</sup> "Pour le dénouement de la pièce, on écorche l'animal tout vif, puis on le met en liberté". Huc, *Souvenirs d'un Voyage dans la Tartarie*, vol. I, p. 123.

venatorial ethics prevent any one from enjoying the fruits of his own exertions, if he be in the company of a fellow tribesman. In that sense W. F. Wentzel was right when he wrote that "when an Indian kills an animal, it is not his own, for he receives the smallest share"<sup>1</sup>. In the east this is divided among the band to which the successful hunter belongs. But in the far west the latter, after having skinned it while warm over a bedding of coniferous boughs, neatly carves it up, and hangs the whole in the branches of a tree. Then, on his return home, he will say to the person he intends to favour: "In such and such a spot of the forest I have killed a deer, a moose, etc. for you. Go or send for it".

This generosity is, however, more apparent than real, the object of such bounty being expected to return the compliment as soon as convenient.

Likewise, within the Mackenzie district, when two or more Indians work a single beaver lodge, the one who draws the game out gives it to some of his companions.

Speaking of carving game, the great traveller, Huc, wrote that "tous les Mongols connaissent le nombre, le nom et la place des os dans la charpente des animaux"<sup>2</sup>. This is as true of the Dénés. Even a child seems to be *au fait* with the anatomy of the animals, and finds the joints without the least difficulty.

An important point of the Déné hunter's etiquette is to minimize the result of his labours. If questioned on his success, he will invariably try to make it pass for a failure, or, at all events, he will depreciate it as much as possible. Therefore, the eastern Déné who returns from the chase and may be eagerly scanned over for a drop of blood that will betray his success to women or children who are probably starving, will almost infallibly tell them at first that luck has been against him. Then after having thawed himself out in silence by the fire-side, he will take out of his bosom four or five cariboo tongues, and direct the now overjoyed women to go for the carcasses of the animals<sup>3</sup>. Likewise, his western brother who returns from a trapping expedition will always try to make it appear that he brings no furs, when his wife is fairly well loaded with the spoils of beaver and other game, or that he has hardly secured any when, in fact, he has met with notable success. Pride seems to be at the bottom of these little tricks. They are tantamount to saying: this may be something to others, but for such a hunter as myself it does not amount to anything.

<sup>1</sup> *Les Bourgeois du Nord-Ouest*, vol. I, p. 89.

<sup>2</sup> *Souvenirs d'un Voyage*, vol. I, p. 347.

<sup>3</sup> The direction to take is indicated by means of sticks planted in the snow at convenient distances, the breaking of shrub tops or tree branches, the blazing of tree trunks, etc.



Barren Ground Caribou.



Fishing through the Ice of Mackenzie River.



## CHAPTER XII.

**Fishing.****Fishes and Fish Names.**

Judged by the criterion of their vocabulary, the southwestern Déné tribes are certainly more familiar with fish game. To speak of the Carriers alone, it would suffice to glance at a dictionary of their language (if any was in existence) to gather the fact that salmon must be their staple food. As a matter of fact, they have no less than six species of that fish in their waters, during some seasons of the year.

But where the richness of their terminology is truly remarkable is in connection with the various stages or conditions of the same fish. *Thallo* is with them the generic name of the sock-eye, or common salmon of commerce, a word which by itself betrays the importance of the object it designates, since it might be translated *the fish*, or more literally the water-fish (*tha*, water; *llō*, fish). But the first thallo that makes its appearance at the sources of the rivers or in the northern lakes is called *tsétai*; that which enters minor creeks to spawn is known as *tha-au-kwællo*, and the last to arrive in the early fall goes under the name of *stlé*.

The male salmon is denominated *hwos'té* by the same tribe; the female, *'kūni*, and the fry, *œ'kūn*. A female ready to spawn is known as *yanthæs'qa*, while the old male is called indifferently *æsiyan* or *tšil*. When dried and stored away for ulterior use, salmon receives the name of *pa*, and such of the fish as are cut up very thin become *'taz* to the natives. If opened out and free of bones, it is then *'kai*; but if simply opened without having the vertebrae removed, it receives the name of *t'sé-ya'taz*, and when cut open through the back instead of along the belly, it is known as *'ta-us'taz*. Finally, when grilled for immediate consumption, it becomes *œtés*; but if previously soaked in water and boiled, it is called *naltsæl*.

All these expressions, I repeat, refer to the same species of fish, *Oncorhynchus nerka* (Walbaum), or sock-eye salmon. They are not adjectives, but nouns. But the waters of the western Dénés are visited by several other salmonoids. There are the big white-fleshed salmon (*O. chavicha*), which affords excellent eating, but does not keep so well; the hump-back salmon (*O. gorbusca*), which is of little economic value; the winter or dog salmon (*O. keta*), a scarcely better article, and the coho (*O. kisutch*). To these we may add the land-locked salmon (*O. kennerlyi*), a most palatable little fish, which does not repair to the sea like all our other salmon, but follows the periodical migrations to the spawning grounds that are distinguishing features of the sock-eye, and ends in a similar decay and final dissolution.

The generic name for all these fishes will warn the reader against taking them for genuine salmonidæ. It may also not be amiss to state that, though hatched in fresh water, they are, all but the last, regular denizens of the sea. In the spring, the fry goes down by the million to the salt water, where it grows till it attains full maturity, in the course of four years. At that age it sets upon returning to its original spawning grounds, that is, the very spot where it was hatched, which it reaches late in the summer, or early in the fall. During its long peregrination of eight or nine hundred miles, it never swerves from the right path, and never mistakes a stream for another, but enters only that whose head-waters saw the beginning of its existence four years previously. As far as can be ascertained, this long journey is accomplished without eating and in the teeth of numberless obstacles, swift water, rapids, shoals, rocky obstructions, and the like. No wonder, then, if, on reaching its destination, it is lean, worn out and with a skin turned blood red.

It then lays out its ova on the shores of the northern lakes, covers them up with sand and dies. We shall see how the natives take advantage of these well known habits.

The only genuine salmon known to the Dénés are the salmon trout (*Salmo purpuratus*), which is found everywhere, and the *inconnu*, or toothless fish (*S. Mackenzii*), which is proper to the Mackenzie basin.

Besides the above we have the loach or turbot (*Lota maculosa*), a voracious fish that swallows trout of almost its own size; the huge sturgeon (*Accipenser transmontanus*), which often weighs several hundred pounds; a small sardine-like fish called *thélmaek* by the Carriers, who secure thousands of it in a single day without becoming overloaded, as it takes at least a dozen to make a pound, and finally a multitude of carpoidæ or carpoids, fish that are full of bones, insipid to the taste and good only for the Indians and dogs.

### Ichthyophobia in the South.

All the Dénés settled along streams or lakes tributary to the Pacific Ocean, the Alaskan Loucheux and western Nahanni included, are partial to fish. They are regular fishermen, with salmon as their staff of life. East of the Rockies, the natives, for the lack of that resource, rely more on the spoils of the chase, though such as live in the basin of the Mackenzie do not overlook fish as a means of subsistence.

Partly because of the nature of their territory, and partly owing to the constant use of venison, the intermediate or mountain Dénés, Sékanais and others, affect to despise fish, and often deride their western congeners for the esteem in which hold salmon. Yet, if necessity drives them to partake of that or any other fish, they will yield without scruple and eat it with as good grace as possible.

Not so, however, with the southern Dénés, the Navahoes and the Apaches. To them all water animals are simply repulsive. They will not see them, never

touch them, and under no circumstance will they consent to taste their flesh. For fish, especially, they entertain such a pronounced aversion that they may truly be said to be possessed of a regular ichthyophobia.

They fear it in many ways. A white woman, for mischief, emptied over a young Navaho brave a pan of water in which fish had been soaked. He screamed in terror, and, running a short distance, hastily tore every shred of clothing from his body and threw it away. Navahoes have been known to refuse candies that were shaped like fish<sup>1</sup>.

As to the Apaches, they will make a gladsome feast off the carcass of a horse or burro that has been dead several days; but they will starve rather than eat fish. Some of their children, who could not always avoid it in their fare at the Government schools, are known to have become sick through fear of the same, to the extent of having to be returned to the huts of their parents.

This extraordinary repugnance of the southern Dénés for what is such an important item in the *menu* of many of their northern cousins seems to partake of the nature of a religious taboo. It could not be a simple natural aversion for a kind of food they have never tasted. It is no doubt based on superstition and the dread of evil consequences, since, in case of accidental contact therewith, they have recourse to the songs and ceremonies of the shaman. Some Navahoes claim that fish was originally a piece of meat, swallowed by the war-god and vomited by him into the water.

Most of the southern Dénés seem to have acquired that particular reverence for water which obtains among some of the Pueblo Indians, such as the Zuñis and the Keres, who offer up prayers and sacrifices at springs. The paramount importance of that element in such an arid country as that of the Navahoes may be a sufficient explanation for the superstitious regard in which those aborigines hold it. It must account also for the taboo placed on any animal living in or on it — ducks and geese are the objects of the same popular disfavour and rejection as articles of diet.

### Fish-nets.

That this complete abstinence from fish is a borrowed custom and the repugnance that prompts it an acquired feeling is made evident by the fact that, not only certain neighbouring tribes who are now as abstemious in this respect are said to have been originally fish-eaters, but also that the Hupas and other Pacific Dénés, some of whom live within measurable distance of the Navahoes, are very fond of salmon and all kinds of fish, nay, even of lamprey eels, which are equally appreciated by them whether in their natural state or when dried.

The various ways of fishing obtaining among the Dénés are netting, scooping, trapping, spearing, harpooning, shooting, and angling.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. W. Matthews' "Ichthyophobia", in *Journal of Folk-Lore*, and "Navaho Legends", p. 239.

The material of the purely aboriginal nets was the fibres of the willow (*Salix longifolia*), the alder (*Alnus rubra*), or the nettle (*Urtica Lyallii*). The inner bark of the two first mentioned shrubs is the part that yields the filaments entering into the composition of fish-net twine. Willow bark was in general use; and I have heard of alder as being made to serve a like purpose nowhere else than in Alaska. The thread-like fibres were twisted or plaited by the women on their naked thigh to the size of common Holland twine, and when prepared in winter the resulting twine was stronger than its modern substitute. The young woman whom Hearne found, in 1776, leading such a lonely life in the northern wastes<sup>1</sup> had by herself several hundred fathoms of that material, wherewith she intended to make a net as soon as spring was sufficiently advanced to use it.

In addition to the shreds of the nettle, the use of which seems to have been confined to some western tribes, a species of wild hemp (probably *Apo-cynum cannabinum*) was sometimes put to the same use in the west. In the far east, Hearne's "Northern Indians" made their fish-nets of babiche, or fine thongs of raw deer skin. But, as the old trader aptly remarks, after they had been soaked in water for some time, their material grew so soft and slippery that when large fish struck the net, the hitches were quite liable to slip and let it escape.

As to the Hupas, they made their nets from the leaves of *Iris macro-siphon*, each of which yielded but two fibres, which were extracted by drawing the leaves past the thumb, protected by an artificial nail made of a mussel shell. In this connection, it would certainly sound strange to a northern Déné to be told that his southern congeners leave it to the men to make the fish-nets. None but women would ever dream of attempting such a task in the north.

Even salmon is captured by means of nets among the Hupas. These nets are some sixty feet long by three and a half wide. The northwestern Dénés measure the width of their nets by the number of their meshes. Large-meshed nets have seventeen meshes from side to side, while such as are intended for smaller fish count something like twenty across. All kinds of drag-nets are at least a hundred feet long with the same aborigines. In the Mackenzie they are from three to forty fathoms in length, and from thirteen to thirty-six inches in depth. The short ones are set in the eddy currents of the rivers, and the long ones in the lakes<sup>2</sup>.

Of course, all those nets are provided with wooden floats to buoy up their upper edge, and sinkers, mere pebbles or stones in the north, but discs three and a-half inches in diameter, with holes chipped in the centre, among the Pacific division of the family.

<sup>1</sup> See our Chapter VIII.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. A. Mackenzie's Journal, vol. I, p. 237.

They are set in the evening, from the shores of lakes or islands out, or in the still waters of the rivers, and raised in the early morning of the following day. The sense of proprietorship, which we have seen so developed in the north with regard to hunting, extends even to such an apparently menial pursuit as that of the fisherman in the far west. Some fishes, as two kinds of trout and the coregone, are so abundant at certain seasons, September and October, that they are then very extensively sought after. This is to the Carriers and Babines like a secondary harvest after the great salmon run. At that time, families or groups of related families have their traditional fishing grounds, particular bays, capes or islands, wherefrom they regularly set their nets for a few weeks to the exclusion of any others not in the possession of the same rights.

Among the Hupas, when the nets have been set, parties of men in canoes go out to drive the fish into them, just as is done by the Tartar fishermen of the Hoang-Ho<sup>1</sup>.

This driving of the fish is not customary in the northwest, except in connection with fish trapping and fishing for . . . grebes. For, strange as it may seem, these fowl are usually taken by means of common fish-nets, which are set in long lines hanging down just above the water. A number of men mounting seven or eight wooden canoes lead them gently in the direction of the obstacle, and, at a given signal, make a great outcry, accompanied by a terrific noise with their paddles against the edges of their canoes, when the game take to flight and immediately strike against the nets, in the meshes of which they are caught by the neck, and immediately killed by their pursuers. No fishing — or shall I say hunting? — is so exciting, and this sport is always quite remunerative.

The grebes, having been stripped of their feathers, are cut up and cured by means of smoke and air, while the fat is converted into cakes which serve afterwards to season the preserved berries. Even the down of these birds is now utilized in the preparation of pillows.

### Fish Traps.

Living mostly on salmon, the western and Alaskan Dénés have naturally more than one way of securing the same. To speak only of mechanical devices, they possess more models of traps designed for the capture of that one fish than they use in connection with land game of all kinds. The Carriers alone have the *nazrwæt*, the *khæs*, the *yuta-skhai*, the *'kûntzai*, the *œs*, the *we*, the *thé-skhai*, and the *tœ-skhai*. A few words will explain the nature and working of each<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Huc's *Souvenirs d'un Voyage dans la Tartarie*, vol. I, p. 246.

<sup>2</sup> For fuller details see my "Notes on the Western Dénés", pp. 84—91.

In the first place, let it be well understood that all these contrivances are of open trellis work, generally of free fir split and shaved to the size of a switch, and held in position by means of wattap, or thin spruce root.

The first four necessitate the barring of the streams with weirs, or barriers made of stout stakes driven into the bed of the river, with intervals filled in with hurdles of spruce twigs, after the manner of the Kamstkadals and other aborigines of northeastern Asia. The river being thus cut off from shore to shore, all ascent becomes impossible to the fish except through certain openings which lead into the *nazrwæt*, sorts of funnel-shaped baskets which usually terminate in very narrow and long cylinders, also of open

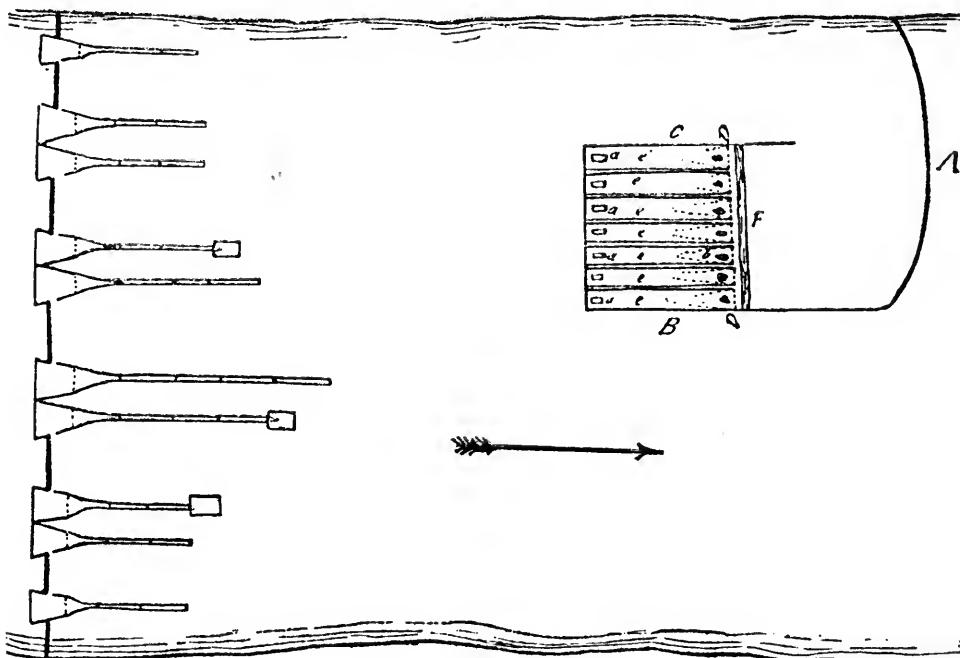


Fig. 44.

work, which preclude the possibility of escape, for the lack of room to turn back. These narrow conduits, in which the fish soon gets so cramped that it can hardly move, are the *khæs*, of which several may occasionally be used in immediate succession. At the end of the farthest from the *nazrwæt*, some still add rectangular box-like reservoirs, *yuta-skhai*, provided with conical ducts tapering into the box which are intended to prevent the egress of the fish. The large apparatus standing by the fisherman in our full page illustration is a *nazrwæt*.

The '*kuntzai*' is of easier construction and in more general use. It is a large cylindrical basket, perhaps fifteen feet long by four in diameter when serving to catch salmon. Closed at one end, its entrance, which is at the other,

is provided with a duct tapering almost to a point, which leads into the basket not far from the middle of the whole cylinder. The fish, finding its progress arrested by the obstruction in the stream close to the trap, rushes into this conduit, and as it ends in sharp sticks, it suffices to deprive the prisoner of any temptation to turn back<sup>1</sup>.

In some places, the four above described appliances are used conjointly. Fig. 44 gives an idea of the arrangement which then results. The reader will understand that *G* represents the weir with its assortment of verveaux, or *nazrwæt*, while the long rectangles to the right stand for the cylindrical 'kûntzai, whose lids or doors are at *a*, whence the fish are taken up. *F* is a large beam over which the fisherman walks to release the apparatus by relieving it of the big stone that keeps it down, while his wife, in a canoe, empties it at the opposite end. Into these the Indian generally has to drive the fish at night, which is secured in the morning.

The 'kûntzai are occasionally used to capture smaller fish in the creeks.

In deep water it is only the vicinity of the shores that can be utilized. Two kinds of traps, veritable automatic machines, may then serve the ends of the fisherman. These are the *æs* (fig. 45) or the *we* (fig. 46). The working

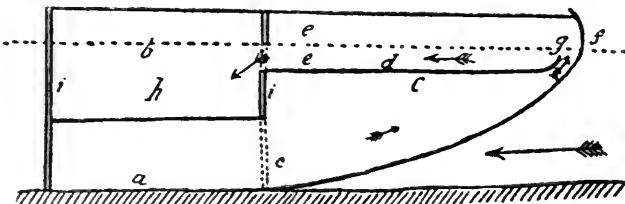


Fig. 45.

of the former, which evinces no little ingenuity, may be understood by remarking that the double lines in our diagram are intended for two of the four stakes which hold the appliance in position. The fish enters at *a* and *c*, after

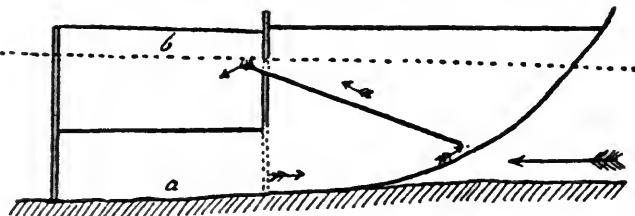


Fig. 46.

which its course is easily followed. The outlines *e* stand for the surface of the water and *h* for the reservoir, where the salmon is finally captured.

<sup>1</sup> Traps similar to the *nazrwæt* and the 'kûntzai are common all over northeastern Siberia. Cf. Bush, "Reindeer, Dogs, and Snow-Shoes", *passim*; Geo. Simpson, "Journey round the World" etc.

The *we* is but a modification of the *æs*, and requires no special explanation. As usual, both traps are of open basket-work.

The *thé-skhai* is simply a very long box, one end of which is provided with a sort of swinging trap-door, which gives entrance to the fish, but admits

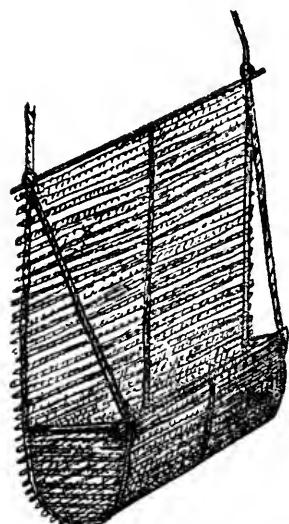


Fig. 47.

of no exit, while the *tæ-skhai* (fig. 47) is a kind of very wide pot-hanger, also of wicker-work, in the curved bottom of which the salmon falls after having struck the perpendicular matting, in its attempt to jump over the fall above which the trap is suspended.

Some such contrivances, notably the *nazrwæt* and the *'kûntzai* under slightly altered forms, are known as far as Alaska. The Yukon Dénés settled below Koyukuk use them even in the winter months.

All the above mentioned traps are automatic, and as they are made of open work, they keep the fish alive for almost any length of time. All the Indian has to do is to empty them when full. In this respect, they are far superior to the system formerly in vogue among the Hupas, which required the agency of man to effect any capture. Dr. Goddard describes it thus: "V-shaped obstructions used

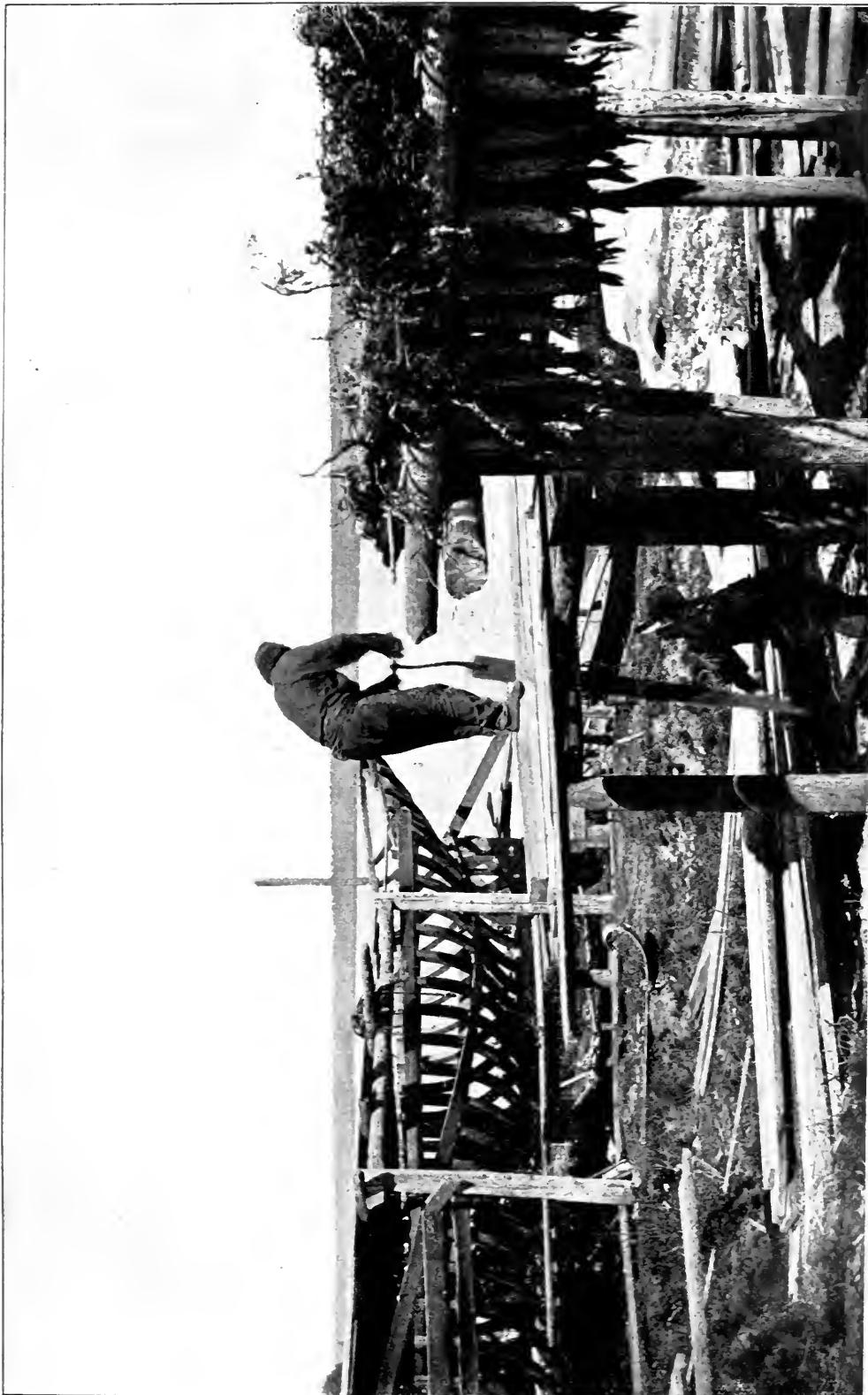
to be constructed in the river; the opening of the V was up-stream, one wing resting on the shore and the other projecting well into the stream. At the point of the V was built a boat-shaped trap of round poles somewhat higher than the surrounding water. The fish passed up around the end of the obstruction. They were frightened back by men in canoes, and in trying to escape entered the trap, through the bottom of which the water passed freely, leaving them helpless"<sup>1</sup>.

Among the Carriers and the Babines, even the setting of the salmon traps is regulated by traditional usage. No person will dare infringe on a family's rights to a better place in the weir. Likewise, important parties may enjoy the hereditary privilege of having two traps in operation, while others could not find room for one.

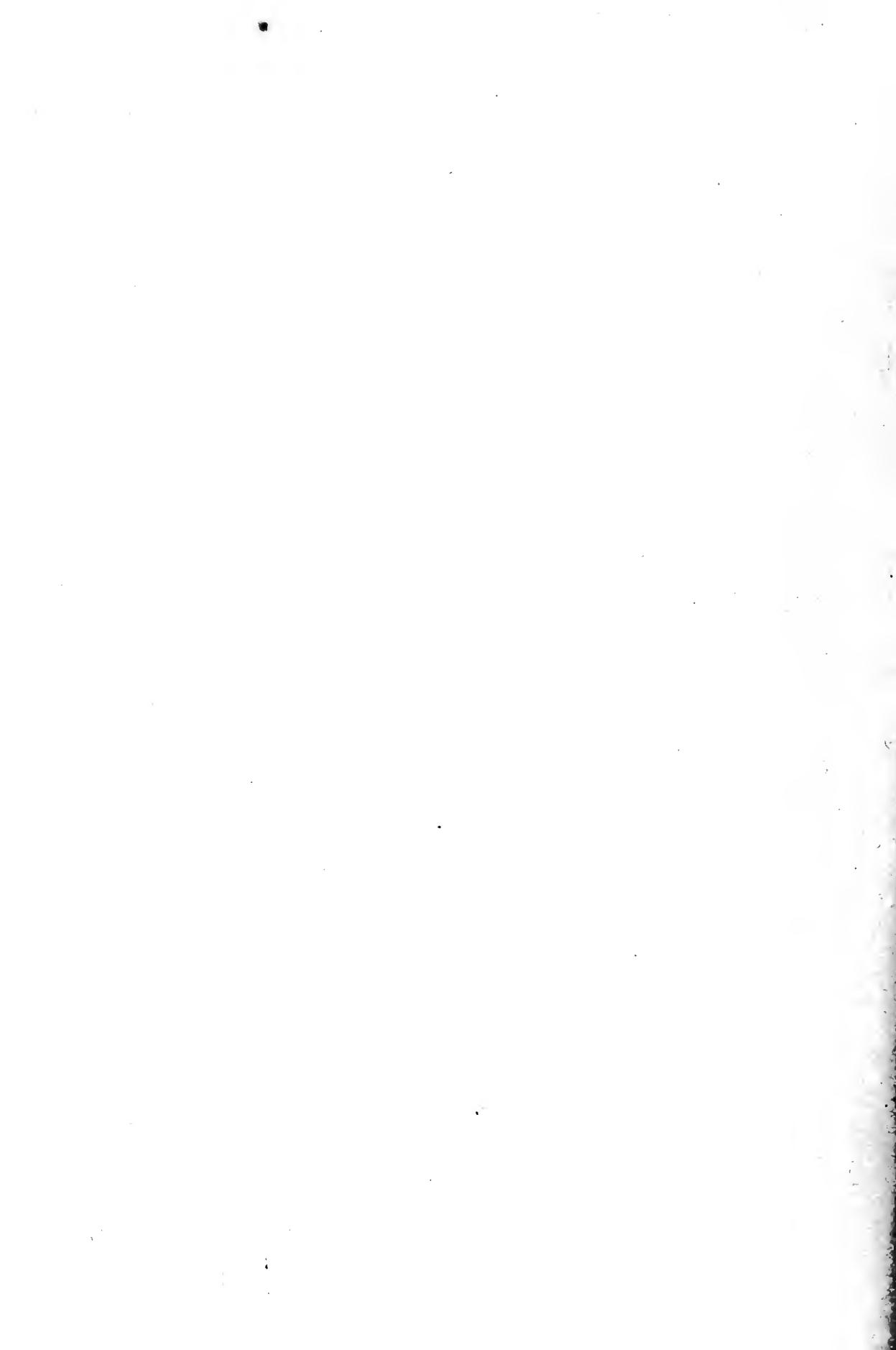
#### Other Fishing Methods.

In large, swift rivers, not even the *we* or the *æs* can be set. The natives will then manage to erect temporary structures in the shape of scaffoldings projecting into the stream as far as the depth of the water will allow. Over these they nightly stand in wait for the fish, and either spear it with a harpoon, or scoop it up by means of a dip-net. I am personally acquainted with the use of three different models of fish harpoons. Fig. 48 represents

<sup>1</sup> "Life and Culture of the Hupa", p. 25.



Fish hanging out to dry.



that which obtains among the Chilcotins. It is so made that on hitting the fish, both darts (which were originally of mountain sheep horn) detach themselves from the forked shaft, through the instrumentality of the barbs which prevent

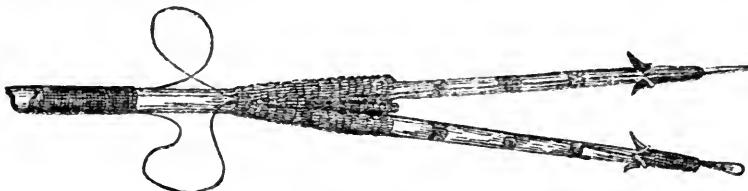


Fig. 48.

the escape of the fish. Darts and shaft are connected by means of a fine plaited rawhide line.

A portion of the Babine tribe use single-darted harpoons for the same purpose. They work on the same principle as the above.

But the Carriers have so far adhered to the double-hooked harpoon here-with figured (fig. 49), which may be said to have a continental importance,

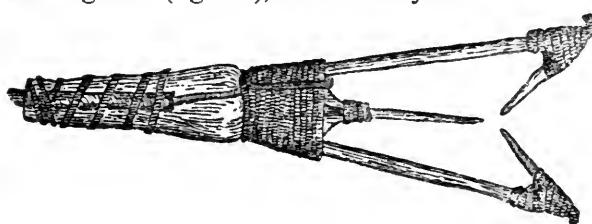


Fig. 49.

since it is known practically among all the native races of North America, including the Eskimos. They make it of all sizes, and use it in connection with all kinds of large fish. When in its largest form it serves for the large

white-fleshed salmon, which, lacking the gregariousness of the sock-eye, demands greater exertions, as it must be speared singly.

I have also seen sock-eyes speared in a very primitive way. An Indian, armed with a canoe pole made very sharp at one end, would stand in the shallow water of a stream spying out the fish, at which he would launch his pole with the greatest force at his command, sometimes with excellent effect.

Harpoons smaller than that of fig. 50, though of analogous make, are called into requisition in connection with winter fishing. Trout is then the object of the fisherman's efforts. As it is sought in almost all kinds of weather through the ice of the northern lakes, its capture is fraught with considerable inconvenience. Once a hole has been cut, some sort of a screen is erected with spruce boughs, to give a minimum of protection against the biting winds and allow of a clearer perception into the abysmal depths of the lake. Then the native drops, and gently oscillates in the water, bone imitations of coregone fry to attract the trout, which, as a rule, is speedily speared as soon as seen.

Apropos of winter fishing, we should not forget to state that in the far east even nets are used in this connection.

As to the dip-net, it is generally a deep pouch-like netting tapering to a point at the bottom and attached to a long wooden fork, or, when intended for small fish, fastened to the curve made by a switch whose extremities are joined to form a handle. Among the Carriers, the former pattern may measure six feet in depth, while the latter sometimes scarcely has as many inches in the same direction.

Along the Yukon, the salmon dip-nets are made like the smaller model of their Carrier equivalents, and there they do service right in midstream. Whymper relates meeting one day with "the pretty sight of a whole fleet of birch-barks, proceeding together as regularly as a company of soldiers. At a given signal the owners of each dipped his round hand-net into the water, and if, on raising it, a big salmon came up struggling to get away, there was a general shout of derision".

There is almost pathos in his concluding remarks: "I saw so much harmless fun and amusement among these Indians, and they evidently find so much enjoyment in hunting and fishing, that I could only wish they might never see much of the white man, and never learn the baneful habits and customs he is sure to introduce"<sup>1</sup>.

As to obtaining fish by means of shooting, it will easily be understood that such a method partakes more of the nature of an expedient consequent on unforeseen contingencies than that of a normal occupation. Yet I have seen salmon killed with a fowling piece, and Petitot records the capture of sixteen big fishes at one time with no other implements than a bow and arrows<sup>2</sup>.

Angling proper, except in the above described form of winter fishing, is now almost a thing of the past among the Dénés. Only children, wayfarers short of provisions, and the proverbially miserable orphans, now resort to that tedious process. It was formerly more in vogue, being even attended with superstitious observances, most of which are now obsolete. The hooks were of bone, and at times pin-like pieces of the same material, perhaps an inch and a-half long and very sharp at either end, did duty on similar occasions.

### Fishing Observances.

The Déné mind sees mystery everywhere. Irrespective of its intrinsic value or peculiar make, the native instinctively attaches more or less unaccountable qualities to some mechanical device, weapon of the chase or fishing implement, that has, perhaps accidentally, proved successful. *Post hoc, ergo propter hoc*, seems to be the basis of all his judgments. An old net, for instance, which by a stroke of good luck has been set over a shoal of fish, will be infinitely more esteemed, even though it may be in locks, than

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<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 232.

<sup>2</sup> *Autour du Gd. Lac des Esclaves*, p. 267.

a new one that has been used but once, probably in the wrong place. It is here the question of personal supernatural powers extended to things inanimate.

However, barring the very pronounced ideas concerning the malefic influences of menstruating women, few of the practices, formerly in honour among the Déné fishermen, have successfully resisted the inroads of civilization among them. When I say fishermen I am somewhat astray. In the north, the men spear fish and help in the capture of entrapped salmon; but fishing with nets falls almost invariably to the lot of the women.

In Hearne's time, whenever a Déné baited a hook preparatory to angling or fishing under the ice, an aggregate of four, five or six articles more or less foreign to the object in view, was concealed by way of charm under the bait, which was sewed round the hook. In fact, the only bait then used was a bunch of charms enclosed in a piece of fish-skin made to resemble a fry. This consisted in bits of beaver tails and fat, otter vents and teeth, musk-rat guts and tails, loon vents, squirrel testicles, the curdled milk extracted from the stomach of suckling fawns and calves, human hair, and other articles equally absurd under the circumstances.

As the old author says, "without some of those articles to put under their bait, few of them could be prevailed upon to put a hook into the water, being fully persuaded that they may as well sit in the tent as attempt to angle without such assistance"<sup>1</sup>. Acting upon the above enunciated principle, they esteemed an old hook that had already been successful far above a handful of new ones that had never been tried.

So was it with the net. To attain its fullest efficiency, it must be accoutred with a variety of the most unlikely articles. Bird bills and feet were fastened to the head and foot rope of the net, while toes and jaws of otters and minks were also made to contribute their share towards the usefulness of the same. The natives then firmly believed, according to the same author, that not a single fish could be caught without those precautions.

Furthermore, it was forbidden to boil the first specimen of any kind of fish captured in a new net. It had to be broiled whole on the fire, and its flesh carefully taken off the bones without dislocating one joint; after which the bones were laid on the fire, at full length, and burned. A strict observance of these rules was deemed of the utmost importance to ensure the success of a net, and neglect of the same was believed to render it worthless.

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<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 330—31.

## CHAPTER XIII.

**Other occupations.****Berries of the North.**

Hunting is the privilege of man; both sexes take a hand in fishing; but the gathering of the berries and edible roots falls entirely to the lot of the woman. If we consider the Déné stock as a single unit, we must say that it is above all a race of hunters, who realize the importance of fish and are not blind to the usefulness of such minor fruit as their too generally ungrateful soil will yield. With those aborigines, hunting is therefore paramount as a life pursuit; fishing occupies a prominent place in their national economy, and berry picking plays the rôle of a useful accessory.

Of course, the nature of the vegetable products which are sought after by the different tribes depends entirely on their habitats. In the far east, probably owing to the unfavourable climatic conditions, the wild berries hardly seem to warrant sufficient exertion to create a regular pursuit. But in the west some varieties give rise to occupations that last for weeks, and call into play reasoned activities which might almost be called industries. In this respect the Carriers are fair representatives of the Dénés living west of the Rocky Mountains. We could not, therefore, better commence this chapter than by a few words on their vegetable resources, and the various forms of labour which they occasion.

And first as to their berries. None can be compared to the fruit of the *Amelanchier alnifolia*, as regards economic importance. This is so true that though it has in their dialect a specific appellation, they generally call it only *mai*, the fruit. Eaten fresh, it is sweet and sugary; but for some stomachs it proves rather heavy. This cannot be said of the huckleberry (*Empetrum nigrum*), which is to the Babines almost what the service-berry, or *mai*, is to the Carriers. This is a very juicy and somewhat acid little fruit, which grows on the hill sides exclusively. Not possessed of such saccharine properties as the service-berry, nor so diffused as regards territory, it is yet very tasty, quite harmless and on the whole of considerable value.

Next to these we may name the little ground or blue berry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*), whose invariable habitat is the dry sandy flats occupied by the scrub pine (*Pinus contorta*). When fresh or reduced to jam, it is most succulent.

The first of these three representatives of the berry tribe is very generally preserved for winter use, as we shall see presently. The second is often enough similarly treated, while the last is also, but rather seldom, kept over for future consumption.

The following, being always eaten fresh, necessitate no further expenditure of labour than that occasioned by the gathering of the same. There is a sort of cranberry (*V. myrtilloides*), which is somewhat appreciated by the native

palate; the swamp cranberry (*Oxycoccus palustris*), which is rather scarce in the west, but more common in the east; a species of high bush cranberry (*V. pauciflorum*), quite esteemed in spite of its extreme pungency, and two other varieties of *Viburna*, better known to the mountain tribes.

Then there is the famous soap berry (*Shepherdia Canadensis*), whose strongly bitter taste is so forbidding, and yet of which the natives are so fond. As everybody knows, it must undergo special manipulation before it can be appreciated. After it has been mashed in a bark vessel, it is vigorously stirred with the hand, until it springs up into a beautiful rosy foam, which is responsible for its name. Even in that state, however, it cannot be relished by a cultivated palate without the addition of sugar.

Nor should we forget to mention the fruit of the *kinnikinnik* or bear-berry bush (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*), which, though insipid enough to a white man, is of such importance in the eyes of some tribes, as the Chilcotins, that it gives its name to one of their minor seasons. It is very extensively sought after by the women.

The natives occasionally use a few other kinds of small fruit, such as the raspberry (*Rubus strigosus*), the strawberry (*Fragaria Canadensis*), the black currant (*Ribes nigrum*), etc. But as these will not keep, only the children generally stoop to pick them.

### Berry Picking and Preserving.

The work of gathering the berries is done, as a rule, by squads of girls and women, armed with two kinds of baskets: one which is carried on the breast hanging from the shoulders, and a larger one into which the pickings of the breast basket are repeatedly conveyed and finally carried home. Among the western Dénés, both of these are made

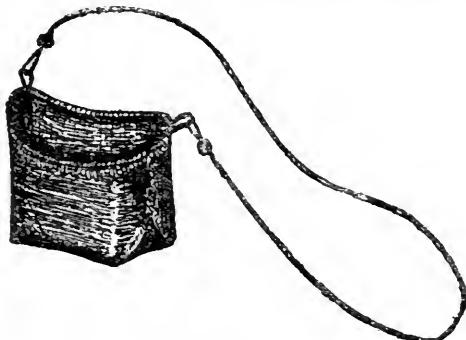


Fig. 50.

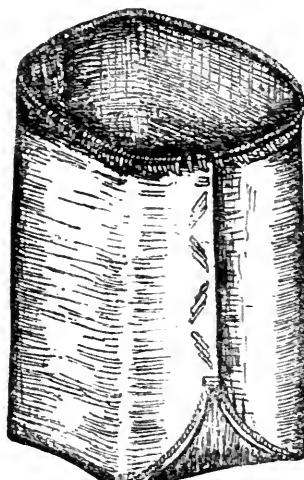


Fig. 51.

of birch bark, after the patterns illustrated in figs. 50 and 51 respectively. The girls take great pride in their smaller berry baskets, and decorate their rims as tastefully as the primitiveness of the material at their command will allow.

When the larger baskets, *tcałyat*, as they are called, are full or nearly so, their contents are covered with leaves of *Epilobium*, as a protection against the flies and the rays of the sun. The joyous troop then trips home, packing on their backs their precious burdens. If industrious and thoughtful, they will not fail to have their breast baskets equally full, in prevision of the demands made on their generosity by the passers-by on the way and the children at home. This manœuvring of the women-folk is repeated day after day, and the westerners attach to it so great an importance that they will sometimes move out and camp for weeks with their families and friends on their berry grounds.

For, even in this respect, the land is parcelled out among them, and the privileges inherent to proprietorship as regards the berry patches are jealously

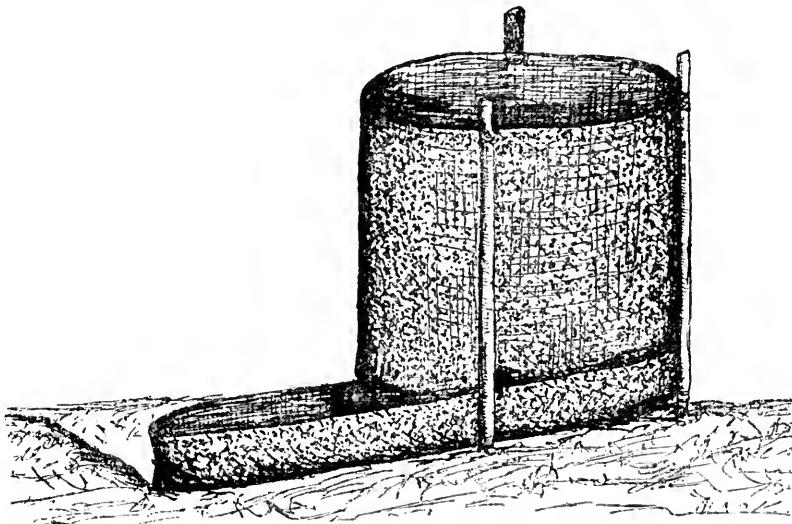


Fig. 52.

guarded. This remark, however, must be understood as applying only to the staple fruit, that is, the service-berries among the Carriers and the huckle-berries with the Babines.

Furthermore, the daily return of the women to the village might almost be viewed in the light of a social event. As soon as they are sighted, those who enjoyed the Indian *far niente* at home greet them with a sort of song, which is audible and intelligible only to the initiated. It consists simply in soft whisperings with the throat, tongue and lips, emitting no sound but that of an undescribable breathing.

When a sufficient supply of the fruit is at hand, the Carriers set upon taking the necessary steps towards its preservation. As I could not improve on the description of the process which I have given elsewhere, I transcribe it here. The operation is too important an exhibition of native industry on

the part of a people not remarkable for its thriftiness to be passed by with a simple mention.

"The Carriers build on the ground, in a sandy spot, if possible, the boiling apparatus herewith represented (fig. 52). They commence by digging a shallow excavation in the sand, into which they lay one end of a rough bark tray, thereby obtaining an oblique inclination for the whole vessel, the lower end of which is alone folded up. Inside the upper half of the tray, a boiler of corresponding width and made of a large piece of spruce bark is erected and secured in position by three sticks driven in the ground, on the outside of both boiler and tray. This boiler has no other bottom than that of the tray, wherein it stands upright and wherewith it forms an obtuse angle. As a consequence of this last circumstance, an aperture is left between the bottom of the tray and the lower edge of the front side of the boiler, that facing the projecting part of the shallow vessel. A few twigs are there deposited, which will act as a strainer with regard to the escaping juice of the berries. Once the boiler has been filled up with the fruit, heated stones are cast in, which have the double effect of pressing down and boiling its contents. The juice escaping in the outer part of the tray is transferred, when necessary, to another vessel.

"The berries in the boiler having considerably sunk down and the stones beginning to cool, a new supply of both is dropped on top of the mash, which operation is repeated as long as the size of the boiler will allow.

"After all the juice has thus been extracted, the residue of the berries is thoroughly kneaded, after which it is spread out in thin layers on willow hurdles previously covered with heracleum leaves, and then exposed to the action of the sun and air. By frequently sprinkling the mash with the juice of the berries and letting it dry until it attains the proper degree of consistency, it finally coagulates into cakes of uniform thickness, which are then stored away for future use. When properly prepared, these will keep for years, and if sprinkled over with a little sugar, they are of tempting succulence even to others than Indians"<sup>1</sup>.

Among the Babines, when the huckleberries are not eaten fresh, they are deposited in large basketfuls in long trough-like vessels of spruce bark, and, after undergoing the usual kneading process, they are thoroughly boiled in the same way as the service-berries. Cakes are then obtained by drying on hurdles in the usual manner.

If the fruit to be preserved is the little blue berry, it is first boiled in a common kettle, then kneaded and spread with its juice over small wicker-work mats, in order to acquire the desired consistency.

As to the soap berries, they are also occasionally preserved. After being mashed, they are boiled with the usual hot stones, which are allowed to stay

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<sup>1</sup> "Notes on the Western Dénés", pp. 125—27.

until nothing remains but the roasted residue of the fruit. When required for immediate consumption, this is soaked in a little water, and stirred with the hands as in the case of the fresh berries.

### Esculents Roots and Plants.

Besides the above-mentioned berries, many roots containing more or less starch were formerly, and are still to a great extent, sought after, dried, and stowed away by the western Dénés. The Chilcotins and southern Carriers have two species of potato-like tubers, identical in nature and taste, though differing in shape and name. One, *œsronh* in Chilcotin, is elongated and closely resembles a diminutive "lady-finger" potato. The other is spheroidal, and known under the name of *sunti*. Both kinds are dug up by the women with T-shaped sticks, and dried in large quantities. Indeed, the quest after those tubers has among the Chilcotins about the same importance as the gathering of the service-berry with the Carriers.

These edible roots are not found in the territory of the Sékanais, nor in the greater part of that of the Carriers. But the latter possess a substitute therefore in the root of a species of fern, not so plentiful but of a larger size. They call it *ah*. It is not dried, but eaten fresh and baked à l'étuvée in this wise: The natives dig out a hole in the ground about three feet in diameter, pave its bottom with heated stones, over which they strew slips of alder bark, and then fill it up with the roots. The whole is afterwards covered with earth, and the roots will be cooked ten or twelve hours later. They claim that this root is then really excellent to eat.

They also relish the bulb of the red lily (*Lilium Columbianum*), in common with all the British Columbian and many other American, or even Asiatic, tribes. The natives harvest it almost as soon as it has sprouted out, a short time after the complete disappearance of snow.

Besides the esculent roots already mentioned under the head of

Food and Cooking (Chapter X), a welcome addition to the Déné larder, both in the east and in the west, is the cambium layer or sap of the scrub pine (*P. contorta*). They get at it by barking the tree with the shoot of a cariboo horn, then scrape off the cambium in ribbon-like shavings with sharp bone implements such as that of fig. 53. After undergoing the usual drying process, the substance will retain for quite a while much of its original spicy taste; but most of the supply procured by the women is often eaten on the spot, or

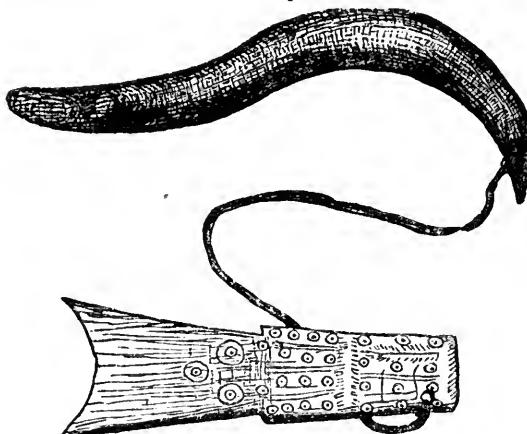


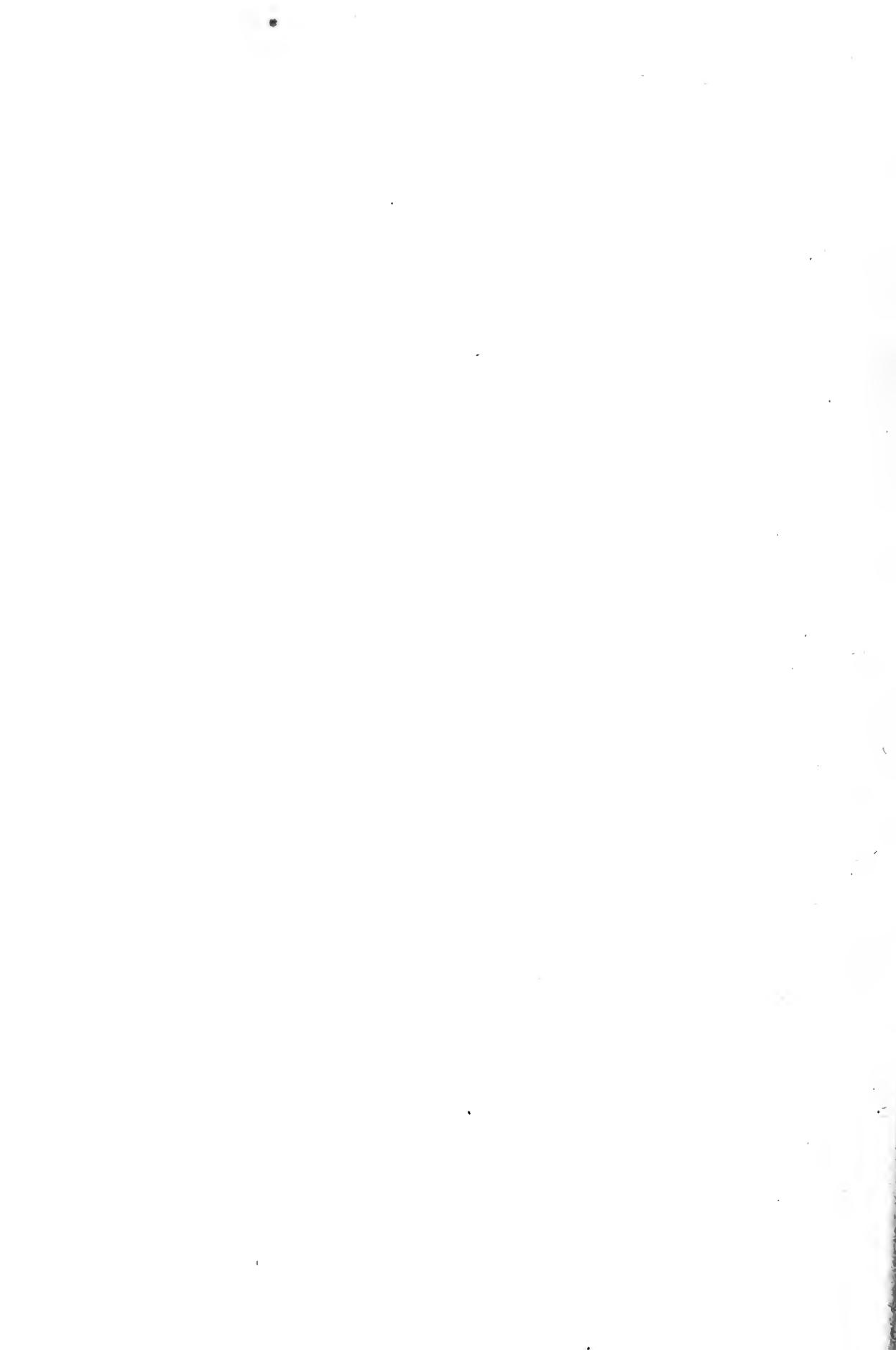
Fig. 53.



A Navaho Flock.



A busy Family in the South.



immediately after their return from the forest. This solid sap undoubtedly savours of the resin inherent to the tree from which it is extracted; but, perhaps owing to that very circumstance, it is considered very wholesome. Though it is incumbent on the women to gather it for the household, no hunter will deem it below his dignity to have an occasional thrust at a pine with his knife or scraper, when he travels alone through the woods.

### Occupations of the Hupa Women<sup>1</sup>.

Acorns are the staff of life for the Hupas, and it belongs to the women not only to collect them, but also to prepare them for the table—or rather the meal. The most esteemed acorns are those of the tan bark oak (*Quercus densiflora*); but those of the Pacific post oak (*Q. Garryana*), of the black oak (*Q. Californica*), and of the maul oak (*Q. chrysolepis*) are also occasionally utilized for food.

Conical baskets of closely twined material serve in connection with gathering the acorns. When a supply of these has been obtained, they are spread in the sun to dry. The roof of the house is often used for that purpose, after which they are stored away in large hampers, some of which measure as much as thirty-nine inches in diameter.

Once the collecting season is over, the acorns are shelled and split, then dried again, and finally put aside, when the grinding process begins.

This is also the work of the women. A buckskin or cloth is spread on a hard flat stone set in the earthen floor of the house. On this is placed a funnel-like basket, the top of which is made firm by a heavy rim turned in so as to be horizontal. The woman sits with the basket under her legs just below the knees, and pounds the acorns to a fine powder by means of a stone pestle. From time to time she takes out the flour and sifts it in a shallow basket, over the lower edge of which it runs, while the coarse pieces are retained for a second pounding.

The next step is to leach the flour. With this end in view, the woman scoops out the washed sand by the shore of a stream, forming a saucer-shaped cavity large enough to hold her flour. Having deposited this in the hole, she builds a fire near by, and heats flat, hard stones, which she drops into a basket-pot. When the water is nearly scalding hot, she scoops it out with a cup and pours it on the flour, adding more of the same as it soaks away. The result of this operation is that the flour loses its bitter taste.

This is now cooked in a water-tight basket, wherein a little water has been poured, and hot stones are dropped in. Some more water is added together with freshly heated stones, and the mush is vigorously stirred with a wooden paddle. When cooked, it is served in small baskets and passed over to the men.

<sup>1</sup> This section is a digest of what Dr. Goddard has written on the subject.

The Hupas are very fond of this acorn meal, and even such of them as are well provided with the white man's food must have it from time to time.

Other vegetable foods, the quest of which keeps the Hupa women busy, are the hazel nuts (*Corylus rostrata*), which are excellent; the nuts of the pepperwood (*Umbellularia Californica*), which are roasted in the ashes, and the seeds of the sugary pine (*P. Lambertiana*), much valued as an article of diet. These last call for the joint exertions of the men and the women, who go together in large companies to the tops of the ridges, where the trees are found, and camp there for some time. These trees are now felled and stripped of their cones, which are then pounded until the seeds fall out. The nuts are eaten raw, either shelled or not.

Many other representatives of the vegetable kingdom are the object of the Hupas' quest, some of which have been enumerated in our tenth chapter.

### **Sheep Tending and Agriculture.**

The reader will not have forgotten the statistics that close our enumeration of the Dénés' resources. The very fact that a single tribe can boast the possession of some 650,000 domestic sheep bespeaks for it other occupations than those we have hitherto reviewed. The Navahoes, who are credited with such an unmistakable sign of prosperity, are therefore more of shepherds than of hunters. Yet the two essentials to the welfare of any flock, grass and water, are scarce in their country. Hence their animals must almost constantly be kept on the move, a condition of things which harmonizes but too well with the roving propensities innate in the heart of every Déné. Almost every family has two, three or more huts, which are occupied in succession according to the season of the year, the size of the flocks, the condition of the grass, and the supply of water.

As a rule, they drive their sheep during the summer into the mountains or upon the high table-lands, near springs, ponds or creeks, taking them down again when the snow falls among the lower foot-hills or out into the valleys. During the winter, flocks and shepherds depend on the snow for their water supply, and a copious fall of the same is generally appreciated, as it foretells a greater moisture in the soil and a larger number of running streams for the ensuing summer.

A. M. Stephen draws a life-like picture of the Navaho family as it moves with its belongings to pastures new. He writes: "The *hos-teen*, as the head of a family is conventionally called, drives before him the band of ponies, which, as a rule, are a degenerate lot of 'scrubs', small bodied, big headed, and ungainly. He carries a bow and quiver of arrows slung at his side, and probably a rifle and a revolver, for the coyotes, and now and then a wolf, make havoc among their sheep, and against these predators they now resort to the more effective modern weapons. He carries on his saddle two or three

blankets and a buckskin or two, but is not very heavily loaded, as he has to chase the straying ponies and keep them to the trail. Following hard behind comes the bleating flock of sheep and goats, meandering and nibbling as they are urged slowly along by the dust-grimed squaw and her children. Two or three of the more tractable ponies carry burdens of household gear stuffed in buckskin pouches and blankets; a bag or two of corn; a bundle of washed wool, and the primitive weaving apparatus; baskets and wicker water-bottles, and often a little imp of two or three years will be perched securely on top of the miscellaneous pyramid. Three or four dogs are an invariable accompaniment of such a caravan, sorry looking curs, but invaluable helpers to the children while herding the flocks<sup>1</sup>.

Besides their flocks, the Navahoes have miniature farms, or rather a few fields here and there, in such places as, owing to the proximity of water, allow of some vegetable growth. These few chosen spots they endeavour to enlarge or increase in number by attempts at irrigation. They cut and keep in repairs rude ditches, and a few have even gone to the trouble of constructing small reservoirs, which ensure a more steady supply of water for their fields.

On these they grow corn — which has been known to them apparently since they reached their present habitat — and such fruits as melons, squashes, beans and peaches.

Even one of the Apache tribes, the Jicarilla, "harvested a considerable quantity of grain and hay last summer" (1903), owing to "an unusually favourable season"<sup>2</sup>. Of course, these are not aboriginal, but newly introduced, conditions, based on a transition in the mode of life of the southern tribes, due almost entirely to the efforts of the United States representatives among them.

### **Occupations according to the Seasons.**

Reverting to the north, we see that few people have more leisure, or manage to take life so easy as the Dénés that have made it their home. For weeks and weeks they will do nothing but smoke their pipe, visit and gossip, or lay idle in camp. Yet, as time flies and a moon succeeds another, the Déné is reminded by the change in the weather or the length of his hyperborean days that some particular kind of work lies in store for him, to which he must attend under pain of exposing himself and his family to the danger of starvation.

The months of April, May and part of June are hard months with him. The snow is melting, and as a consequence travelling becomes exceedingly laborious. Then ophthalmia attacks the hunter, caused by the reflection on the snow of brighter rays of the sun, and, worse than all, his provisions are exhausted or nearly so.

<sup>1</sup> "The Navajo", p. 348.

<sup>2</sup> Report of Commissioner Ind. Affairs for 1904, p. 250.

No wonder then, if the poor famished denizen of the woods greets with songs of joy the first appearance in May of the geese and ducks. No wonder, if the Carrier, especially, sees with exultation the first flocks of the noisy grebes, on the unsavoury flesh of which he will feast until he cannot stand it any longer. Then there is cruising and ambuscading, shooting and shouting in every point of the compass. The Déné wallows in abundance, such as it is, and makes up by endless meals for his weeks of fasting and fatiguing.

He then hurries to his hunting grounds, lives as he can on the game he may meet, and tries his luck at trapping and snaring until the fur of animals becomes worthless. Home again in the village or at the trading post, he enjoys a week or so of sweet *far niente*, after which he may take a short outing in quest of large venison game, while the women busy themselves preparing fish-nets or seines, or attending to the many duties incumbent on their sex.

This is also the season for making the birch bark or wooden canoes. By this time salmon begins to be spoken of in the west, and prognostics are hazarded or eager questions exchanged concerning the probable size of its run. It is a tradition that it is very plentiful every fourth year, after which its numbers diminish till they become altogether too small.

We have now reached the beginning of July. Returning to his village or camp, the western Déné cuts the long fir saplings, as free from branches and clear of knots as possible, which he splits repeatedly and fashions into the slender rods wherewith he makes the traps and mattings mentioned in our last chapter. Then, as the first salmon is caught in the nets, a great outcry is raised, and by the dawn of day the whole village is acquainted with the welcome intelligence.

Shortly thereafter, the most influential men deliberate on the important work in store for the villagers. Plans are made after endless talking and more or less shouting, and gradually every one who has an hereditary right to set a trap in the stream is prevailed upon to contribute his share of labour towards erecting the weir — quite an undertaking in localities like the outlet of Lake Stuart, where the river is very broad and in places quite deep. Some bickering will then occasionally take place among the builders, and a few who are remiss in their exertions will have to be reminded that, if they do not hurry, all the fish will pass through the gaps in the barrier resulting from their lack of energy.

Such of the old fishing contrivances, *nazrwæt* or *'kùntzai*, as are still serviceable are then installed in the traditional spots, and new ones similarly brought into service when necessary.

After two or three weeks of fishing, some men will tire of their diet and of the monotony of their occupation. In the beginning of September, a few will certainly hunt along the streams after the numerous black bears attracted to their shores by the stench produced by the carcasses of the dead salmon.

A week or two thereafter, about all the male population, and some of the females as well, will be off for the great fall hunt after beaver and other fur-bearing animals, while the other women cruise the large lakes from their traditional fishing grounds, in search, first, of trout, and then of whitefish.

By this time, the smaller lakes will freeze over, and the hunters return to dispose of their furs. After they have provided themselves with snowshoes, they start again for the winter trapping in mid-November or thereabouts, when the snow greatly facilitates the observation of the game's movements. After this expedition, another spell of rest in the village is generally indulged in during the latter part of January and the first week of February, when the weather is, as a rule, uncomfortably cold.

By the industrious and foresighted this enforced leisure is turned to good account. New snow-shoes are made or old ones repaired, toboggans are put again in good trim or replaced by better ones, dog harnesses are mended or new outfits prepared, and a variety of minor occupations succeed one another, resulting in most of those items we have already incidentally mentioned, or which shall be described when we come to treat especially of native industries.

Then the great winter hunt begins, which lasts till the melting of the snow early in May, when the bears are sought after in, or near, their hibernating quarters, whence they emerge for their daily foraging expeditions.

Such is the life of the western Dénés. The sequence of the occupations and the nature of some varies a little according to the divers habitats of the northern tribes. W. H. Dall supplies a good schedule of the yearly tasks that occupy the natives of Alaska in his book "Travels on the Yukon"<sup>1</sup>. Yet, do away with the few pursuits proper to the western tribes, such as salmon fishing and all that relates thereto, and the above will still remain a fair enough sketch of the routine of the easterner and of the various occupations that engage his attention from spring to spring.

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<sup>1</sup> pp. 200—201.

## CHAPTER XIV.

**Travel and Transportation.****Travelling in general.**

Of the northern Dénés Hearne very appropriately wrote that they are “the greatest travellers in the known world”<sup>1</sup>. A journey of two or three hundred miles, even when heavily loaded with furs, provisions and the numberless family impedimenta, is nothing to them if they think that some particular trinket they have in mind, or a profit of a few “skins” (trade dollars), will compensate them for their trouble.

When travelling with their families, they will seldom cover more than fifteen miles in a day; but if alone and without any encumbrance, the men will easily attain a speed of fifty miles during the same space of time. So long are many of their journeys that, on undertaking them, they provide themselves with several changes of moccassins.

It is true that, to reach that degree of efficiency, the northlander follows rules which he considers essential to satisfactory results. In the first place, he curtails his sleep as much as possible, starting very early in the morning, and preferring to rest a little in the evening. Then no tripper would attempt any important voyage without being properly belted and having his legs bandaged below the knees or above the ankles. A string of any material tied around the leggings will be deemed conducive to speed and preventive of fatigue; but if made of the tendons of a swift animal, its worth for the purpose will be notably enhanced.

When starting, the foresighted traveller will take it rather easy, but gradually accelerate his speed as he goes along, and be careful never to drink by the wayside, however great may be the temptation to quench his thirst.

Indian trails are to a white man more or less imaginary lines that dodge every obstacle, though in the main straight enough. They consist usually in a broken branch here, a tree trunk blazed there, with an occasional sappling cut down elsewhere; so that the traveller must constantly be on the look out for the next sign of human activity to guide his steps.

In the winter time, travelling is in a sense more easy, because of a better surface offered the foot of the wayfarer and the absence of such obstructions as stones, windfalls, mud pits or bogs, and the like, which an abundant layer of snow levels down to a great extent. Moreover, the prevailing cold is a powerful incentive to exertion, and the size of the footgear then worn necessitates also extraordinarily long strides.

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<sup>1</sup> “A Voyage”, etc., p. 125.

But in the spring the northerner is pursued by a relentless enemy in the shape of ophthalmia<sup>1</sup>. To guard himself against the dread complaint, the northernmost Dénés have adopted the snow goggles of their neighbours, the Eskimos.

That this winter convenience originated in the centre of Asia there seems to be little doubt. Bonvalot figures a petty chief in the western borders of Tibet wearing snow goggles<sup>2</sup>, and Prof. O. T. Mason says that from that point the apparatus may be traced eastwards, until we get to the tundras of northeastern Siberia, over which the drivers of dog sledges wear strips of tin perforated with small holes, or having long, narrow slits, while others are of wood and shaped so as to fit the upper part of the face, through which are also cut narrow slits, one for each eye<sup>3</sup>.

Since we have mentioned the traveller's enemies, we cannot afford to ignore that which renders his life so miserable during the summer. The attentions with which it overwhelms his whole person, especially those parts which are unprotected by clothing, well deserve the compliment of the following quotation from Sir John Franklin's Journal.

"The mosquitoes of America resemble, in shape, those of Africa and Europe, but differ essentially in size and other particulars. There are two distinct species, the largest of which is brown, and the smallest black. Where they are bred cannot easily be determined, for they are numerous in every soil. They make their first appearance in May, and the cold destroys them in September; in July they are most voracious; and fortunately for the traders, the journeys from the trading posts to the factories are generally concluded at that period. The food of the mosquito is blood, which it can extract by penetrating the hide of a buffalo; and if it is not disturbed, it gorges itself so as to swell its body into a transparent globe. The wound does not swell, like that of the African mosquito, but it is infinitely more painful; and when multiplied an hundred-fold, and continued for so many successive days, it becomes an evil of such magnitude, that cold, famine, and every other concomitant of an inhospitable climate, must yield the pre-eminence to it. It chases the buffalo to the plains, irritating him to madness; and the rein-deer to the sea-shore, from which they do not return till the scourge has ceased"<sup>4</sup>.

The accoutrement of even the fleetest tripper must comprise at least an axe, or large bowie knife, to cut the evergreen boughs for his bedding, a drinking cup, which is carried at the belt, a blanket, a kettle and the necessary provisions.

<sup>1</sup> Petitot writes in this connection: "J'ai vu des sauvages se rouler à terre, dans le paroxysme de la souffrance, les yeux engloutis, sanglants, incapables de supporter la vue du feu ni la lumière du jour, littéralement aveugles" (*Autour du Gd. L. des Esclaves*, p. 184).

<sup>2</sup> "Across Tibet", p. 233. New York, 1892.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. "Primitive Travel and Transportation", p. 283. Washington, 1896.

<sup>4</sup> "Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea", vol. II, pp. 116—17.

### Snow-Shoes.

But, of course, in the winter time, the great and really indispensable adjunct to northern travelling is the snow-shoe. Its use among so many tribes possessed of their own idiosyncrasies cannot fail to result in many different styles, all of which it would be hardly profitable to describe in full, as several vary only in minor details. With regard to form and in order of elaborateness all the Déné snow-shoes can probably be reduced to seven styles, namely, the round snow-shoe, the flat snow-shoe, the curved roundfronted snow-shoe, the Loucheux snow-shoe, the Rocky Mountain snow-shoe, the Chippewayan snow-shoe, and the pointed or Hudson Bay snow-shoe.

The first named is oblong in shape, and without any tail or front end. Its general outlines are responsible for the name *s'æs-khè*, bear-foot, by which

it is known among the Carriers. It is in the west proper to children too small to use the regular snow-shoe. Such of the women as are in poor circumstances, widows and others, or any one who may be surprised by an unexpected fall of snow will also occasionally be seen with these primitive winter commodities. As appears from the accompanying fig. 54, a single stick with ends rudely lashed together, over which a cross-bar is resting in the rear part of the implement, suffices to form the frame and the netting is of the coarsest and uniform in size.

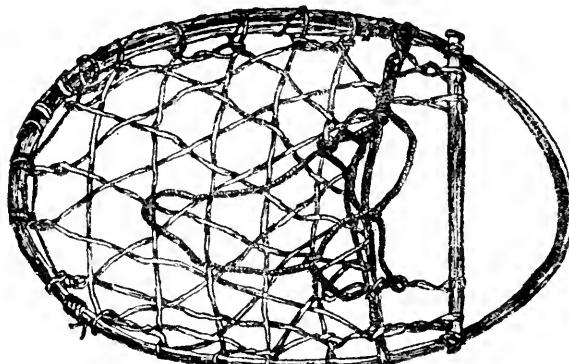


Fig. 54.

Fig. 54.

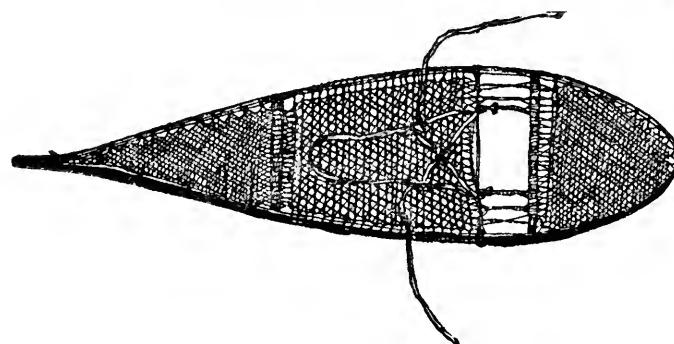


Fig. 55.

The flat snow-shoe (fig. 55) is an old style, now obsolete in the west, though still worn in cases of emergency. Like the preceding, its frame is made of only one piece from tail to tail; but it is provided with three cross-sticks and filled in with two kinds of netting, coarse in the middle and finer at both ends. The former is of moose raw-hide line, the latter of caribou skin cut thin and even, and called *babiche* in the north. Length, three to four feet.



Winter Travelling. Carrisle with Dog Train.



The third model is an improvement on this, being made of two sticks joined at both ends and curved up in front, so as to facilitate walking. To effect their junction, the small ends of the sticks are trimmed and fastened together with a neat lashing of raw-hide lines, thereby forming a rounded head slightly narrower than in the preceding model. In fact, two sticks instead of one and a curved up front are the main points that distinguish it from the latter style, though the general appearance and convenience are thereby not a little improved. Same netting as above; length, about five feet.

The Loucheux snow-shoe is remarkable for its broad rounded front, strongly curved up and, in some tribes, with the outer sides somewhat bulging, so as to differentiate the right from the left shoe. The meshes of the middle or foot netting are very large and square or rectangular, but those of the remainder of the implement are quite close, their material being of deer sinew twisted into twine on the lower Yukon, but of the common babiche further east. In Alaska, a fourth bar is sometimes inserted not far from the

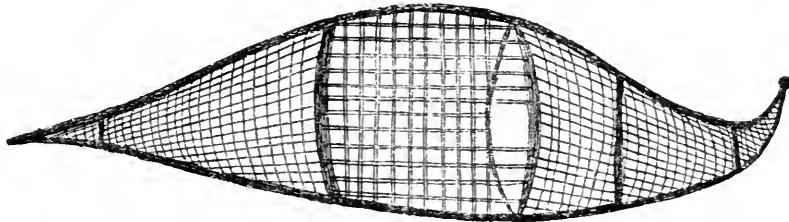


Fig. 56.

tail end; but whether the shoe be provided with it or not, the hind bar is much nearer the end than in style number two, yet proportionately as long, making the shoe abnormally wide at that place, wherefrom it immediately tapers to a point. Loucheux snow-shoes may be as much as five feet eight inches in length.

Longer still is the Rocky Mountain snow-shoe, since in extreme cases it reaches eight feet in length by sixteen inches across. It is generally made of pine, turned up in front and brought round in the form of a semi-circle. The head is narrow, but it gradually opens towards the middle. These immense impedimenta, which recall the Norwegian *ski*, are among the Sékanais provided with no less than six cross-bars. One of the reasons of their abnormal length is the use they are sometimes put to. On the mountain slopes they are made to do duty as sleds, over which the native slides down without much difficulty. Another point of excellence claimed in their favour is that their size contributes towards deadening the creaking of the frozen snow, and thereby facilitates the approach of the hunter when in sight of game.

The Chippewayan snow-shoes are relatively short, broad in the centre, sharp-pointed at both ends, and never interchangeable. Indeed the accompanying fig. 56, which is an exact duplicate of Hearne's own sketch, shows a

very considerable difference between the curves of the inner and of the outer sides. It is from three to four and a half feet long, with an average width of thirteen inches.

Fig. 57 represents one of my own snow-shoes, a fair specimen, I think, of the latest style of what is commonly known as the Hudson Bay snow-shoe. The Carriers call it *tæ-t'lu*, "stitched together", by allusion to the peculiar form of its head, and because the fore-ends of the two side sticks must have originally been united by means of stitches of babiche. Nowadays small nails or screws are more commonly used in that connection. To add to the gracefulness of the front and prevent it from shrinking in, a fourth bar is inserted some distance from the point, and the resulting tension corrected by a transversal cord which binds fast the extremities of the two sticks. The ground netting, which is as usual of fine babiche, passes under both cord and bar. Little tufts of coloured yarn issuing from each side of the frame are intended

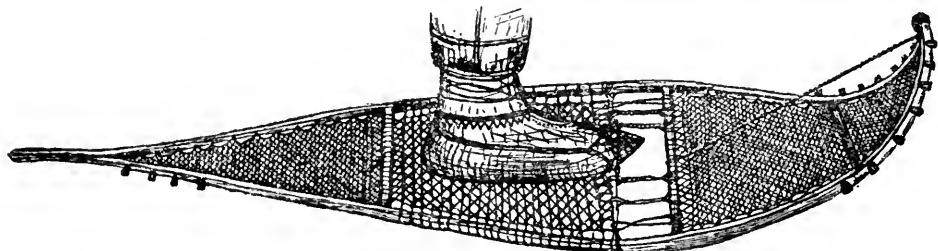


Fig. 57.

to enhance the elegance of the implement. Both shoes fit either right or left foot. Length, about four feet.

In the west, the side sticks of the snow-shoes are generally of black spruce or of Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga Douglassii*), but those of the mountain maple (*Acer glabrum*) or of mountain ash (*Pyrus Americana*) are more esteemed. In all cases the cross-bars are, as a rule, of willow or birch. The latter material serves to make the frame of the Loucheux and of the Chippewayan snow-shoes, while the Rocky Mountain model is more often of pine wood.

### Snow-Shoeing.

In the far north, the Dénés of the Great Bear Lake basin generally use consecutively snow-shoes of a slightly varying make. After having worn the common, close-meshed, hunting snow-shoe till some time in February or March, as soon as the surface of the snow gets hard and crusty, they undo the netting of their footgear and fill the frame with a coarse lashing with square and large meshes, resulting in what they now call the reindeer snow-shoe. But, a month later, when the snow is melting, this is in its turn discarded for "swan snow-shoes", a small variety which they will use until the appearance of the first swan flocks<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Petitot, *Exploration du Grand Lac des Curs*, pp. 205—206.

The donning of that awkward appendage for the first time can hardly be done unaided. At all events, it requires some practice to prepare oneself the foot lashing, which, once ready, is ordinarily left unaltered as in fig. 55. A glance at fig. 57 will furthermore help forming a correct idea of the way it is put on. All the points of intersection in the lacing lines are sliding knots which permit of adjusting the same to the size of the foot. The forepart of the latter once inserted under the X-like lacing near the toe-hole, the back part or loop of the line is made tight against the heel, and the loose ends are brought up and fastened round the ankle. To disengage the foot therefrom is the work of a second.

As to the merits or demerits of snow-shoes as winter commodities, opinions vary. They must, of course, be acknowledged a necessity, but the late Dr. Frank Russell wrote that "they are a positive encumbrance which must be raised at each step, so that the body of the shoe may be clear of the surface. The step is therefore higher when the soft snow allows the shoe to sink; it is lengthened with large shoes which glide over each other so that the feet are laterally separated but little more than usual"<sup>1</sup>. To which he added further on: "Truly the heavy hunting snow-shoe, or an ill-tied one of any sort, is a weariness to the flesh".

On the other hand, Fred. Whymper claims that after a little use he became quite proficient in snow-shoeing. Of Russell's "encumbrances" he writes: "The only secret in wearing them is to strive to forget you have them on at all, and to walk exactly as you would anywhere else"<sup>2</sup>. I fancy, however, that the novice in snow-shoeing unlucky enough to forget that he has that footgear on and who walks "exactly as he would anywhere else" would pretty soon be reminded of its existence by a well conditioned tumble in the snow. Pity the hapless wayfarer in that lowly situation! He takes an icy head bath, fills his mittens with snow, wrenches his ankles and breaks his snow-shoe lines in his efforts to right himself.

The truth is that snow-shoeing demands so particular a gait in walking that many an Indian keeps it up even from freed from that real encumbrance. The strides must be longer, so that the broader part of one shoe may be brought close to the narrow end of the other, and the with of the impedimenta causes in the body a sort of swinging motion from right to left which is very fatiguing to beginners.

And then happy is he who does not experience the terrible *mal de raquettes*, or snow-shoe sickness! I have been day after day tortured by hunger; I have been tired down by mountain climbing until I could hardly stand up; I have been so exhausted by weeks of walking through a trailless forest that

<sup>1</sup> "Exploration of the Far North", p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 60.

I had literally to lie down from time to time on the hard rocky ground; but I cannot compare these difficulties with the unspeakable sufferings caused by the strain on the muscles of the leg or hips which is known in the north as the *mal de raquettes*.

But we are concerned with the Dénés, and should not mind the awkward representatives of our own race who cannot get to appreciate without a painful apprenticeship that pride of their winter travelling. For the northlander does take pride in his snow-shoes; he makes them as neat as possible, and adorns them with vermillion marks, which originally symbolized his familiar genius. Thomas Simpson speaks of a boy scarcely two years old and still unweaned who walked on snow-shoes. "I had the curiosity to measure them", he says, "and found their dimensions exactly two feet in length, including the curved point, by six inches at the broadest part. The little urchin was so fond of these painful appendages that he hugged them as a plaything, and bawled lustily when his mother attempted to take them from him"<sup>1</sup>.

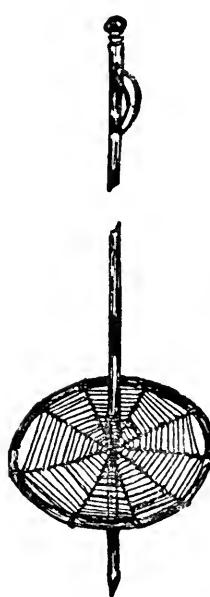


Fig. 58.

Of course, being used to that footgear from such a tender age, the Déné does not feel it at all, and makes with it wonderful progress. Yet it will be noticed that, were it only for a change, he will take it off as soon as he reaches a hard, well beaten track. Over fresh snow those shoes are especially fatiguing. They not only sink deeper, but much of the side snow falls on the forepart and soon covers it up, proving at the same time a quite unwelcome weight to lift. In preview of this, the wayfarer always carries a staff, wherewith he strikes the snow off from time to time.

Among the Carriers, the winter staff is provided near its lower end with a little wheel of wood about five inches in diameter which, being filled in with a coarse lacing of thongs resembling a spider web, renders to the hand of the traveller over snow fields the same service as the snow-shoe does to his feet, by preventing the stick from sinking too much (fig. 58). This staff is a counterpart of that used in Norway, northeastern Asia and among the western Eskimos. Yet, strangely enough, I do not remember having noticed more than one mention of it in the whole range of my readings on the Dénés of the great north. Fr. Petitot relates having once discovered tracks of its discoid appendage on the snow<sup>2</sup>. Prof. O. T. Mason deems it, with every appearance of reason, of recent Asiatic introduction in America<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 237.

<sup>2</sup> *Autour du Grand Lac des Esclaves*, p. 21.

<sup>3</sup> "Primitive Travel and Transportation", p. 272. A similar staff is used in the basin of the Amoor to assist the rider in mounting his reindeer (Bush, "Reindeer", etc., p. 134.).

The Carrier makes it serve a novel purpose, which I have tried to illustrate in fig. 59. The hand of the hunter, warm and trembling from the excitement



Fig. 59.

of the chase, if passed through the leather loop which often accompanies the upper part of the staff, can thereby be steadied and find a reliable support for the barrel of his gun while in the act of firing.

### Ancient Sledges.

Winter travelling with one's family implies sleighing. Moreover, in the manufacture of the primitive vehicle used in this connection, we have again a patent manifestation of the assimilative disposition of the Dénés. Before we prove this, I must be allowed a remark which may have its usefulness, were it only to correct a mistaken notion of a few modern sociologists concerning the respective rôles of the sexes in primitive society.

How many readers, or even professional ethnologists, are aware of the fact that, until little more than a century ago, the northerners had no dog-

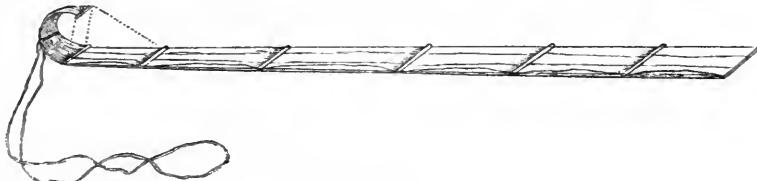


Fig. 60.

trains, and that women-sledges were their only means of transportation over the snowy steppes of the east and through the hilly forests of the west? Yet nothing is truer. Hearne never once mentions dog trains, but quite often speaks of sledges drawn by women, and the sketch he gives of the toboggan (reproduced in fig. 60) is evidently intended for human draught. Moreover,

only fifty-five years ago Richardson expressly declared that "when to fur traders first penetrated to the Elk River, the Athabascans had only a small breed of dogs useful for the chase, but unfitted for draught; and the women did the laborious work of dragging the sledges"<sup>1</sup>.

As to the make up of these sledges, it has little changed since Hearne's time. Owing to the fact that the boards of which they almost entirely consist were originally made with no other tool than a knife, they hardly ever exceeded five or six inches in width, rendering two, sometimes three, of them necessary. Nowadays the Déné sleighs are never made of more than two planks, and often one suffices.

Nothing simpler, it would seem, than the composition of these vehicles. Yet their construction demands some skill on the part of the workman. In the first place, it must be understood that, in order to prevent the possibility of friction with the frozen surface with which the toboggan is constantly brought in contact, not a nail enters into its make up. Babiche lines or leather thongs take their place, and the birch or larch boards are literally sewed together with that material, while several cross-bars are similarly secured on the upper side of the same. These bars serve at the same time to strengthen the vehicle and to fasten the ground-lashing to which the load is tied by means of other strips of leather.

Nor should we forget that, with a view to lessening all obstacles to easy traction, all the babiche stitches in the ground boards must be made so that they will not go through, thus leaving a perfectly smooth surface underneath. And then there is a certain knack of bending properly the forepart, so that the carriage will not dive into light snow, but, on the contrary, slide over the inequalities of the trail and the many hard snowdrifts encountered on the open plains and Barren Grounds.

Sam. Hearne states that the women-sledges were not less than twelve or fourteen feet long, and sixteen inches wide in his time. It would seem that the modern Dénés are more considerate for the welfare of their dogs than their fathers were for that of their women. For — in the west at least — few toboggans are now more than ten feet long. The thickness of the planks has remained the same: slightly over a quarter of an inch. But they are hardly ever more than twelve inches wide.

### **Modern Sledges and Sleighting.**

These sledges are now drawn by three or four dogs, harnessed in single file, by means of leather collars filled with hay or other material and a moose skin band which, passing over the back, holds up the traces, while another under the breast prevents — not always successfully — the dog from escaping.

<sup>1</sup> The late Dr. Brinton, for one, does not seem to have been aware of this fact when he wrote of the dog: "he aided somewhat in hunting, and in the north as an animal of draft" ("The American Race", p. 51).

When in sight of game, or through sheer viciousness if tired of the work, some will at times manage to get loose. Others, too, are in the habit of gnawing off the leather traces ahead of them, thinking thereby to free themselves from their temporary bondage. When this foible is known, the traces within the reach of their teeth have to be of steel or iron<sup>1</sup>.

It requires some training to drive a dog team properly. The accompanying full page illustration represents one of the many obstacles which are daily met on the way. And then there are the turns in the road, the descents and the ascents, and, worse than all, the slopes of the steep hills to follow, when a false step or a wronk jerk of the stout rope which the driver uses as a rudder at the rear of the toboggan would not only capsize the load, but hurl it along with the team to the bottom of the precipice.

Sleighing over lakes or plains is not so difficult, but infinitely more tedious. Unless the track be exceptionally good or the load very light, the driver has almost constantly to help the dogs by pushing with a stick, which he is but too often tempted to launch at some particular member of the team too lazy to work, or which only feigns to pull — for some dogs are almost human in the tricks they indulge in while harnessed to a sleigh.

The dogs are now of a mongrel breed. The largest in the band is placed immediately in front of the sledge, and on him devolves the task of steering, while the most alert and intelligent is called the foregoer and leads the team. A man on snow-shoes usually precedes them, ready to help the driver when necessary.

At night, one dried salmon is the usual ration per dog in the west, while in times of plenty half as much in the morning and a quarter of a fish after the noonday rest may form the menu of two other meals. But the dogs are more often fed only at night, as in northern Siberia, and in the east their daily allowance consists in two white-fish weighing about three pounds apiece.

Nowadays improved toboggans for passengers are made, much after the pattern of that represented in our full page illustration, though in the west they are more often covered up about two-thirds of their length from the front. These go by the French name *carriole*, and, when up to date, they resemble in shape large cradles made of parchment moose skin, wherein the traveller is snuggly ensconced while his driver follows, whip and steering rope in hands.

For the sake of expeditiousness, when the snow is deep and no track is beaten, one of the crew generally goes ahead as far as he can in the evening while the others are engaged in preparing the encampment and supper. This path immediately freezes over, and proves very handy on the morrow, when a start is often made before dawn. An identical practice obtains in the basin of the Amoor<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> In Chapter XII of Bush's work already referred to the reader will find an excellent sketch of the ways of sled dogs.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 167.

Speaking of the conditions existing in the east, Whitney says that "four dogs will haul four hundred pounds on a fair track from twenty-five to thirty-five miles a day. In the woods where the snow is deep and the trail must be broken the day's trip will be fifteen to twenty miles. On a good lake or river track, drawing a *carriole*, they will go forty to fifty miles a day, and keep it up several days"<sup>1</sup>. Further on he relates being told that eight or nine hundred and even a thousand pounds are commonly hauled by four dogs in the Mackenzie district; but he very sensibly disclaims any belief in the latter story. According to my own experience in the west where the country is more hilly, all a dog team could haul the distance specified by Whitney is two hundred pounds or slightly more, and even on a fairly good lake track

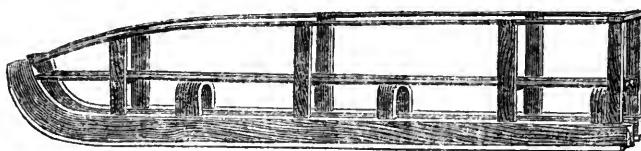


Fig. 61.

thirty-five to forty-five miles a day has always been reckoned fast travelling west of the Rockies.

Reverting to the style of the toboggan itself, figs. 61 and 62 will now tell the story of the Déné receptiveness. The former is an Eskimo sledge;

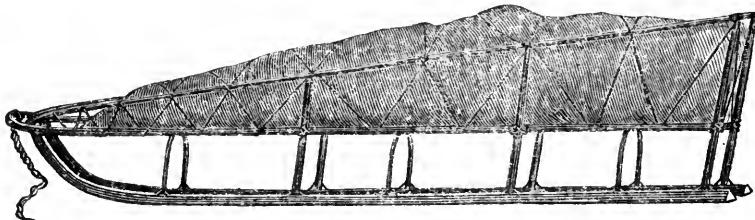


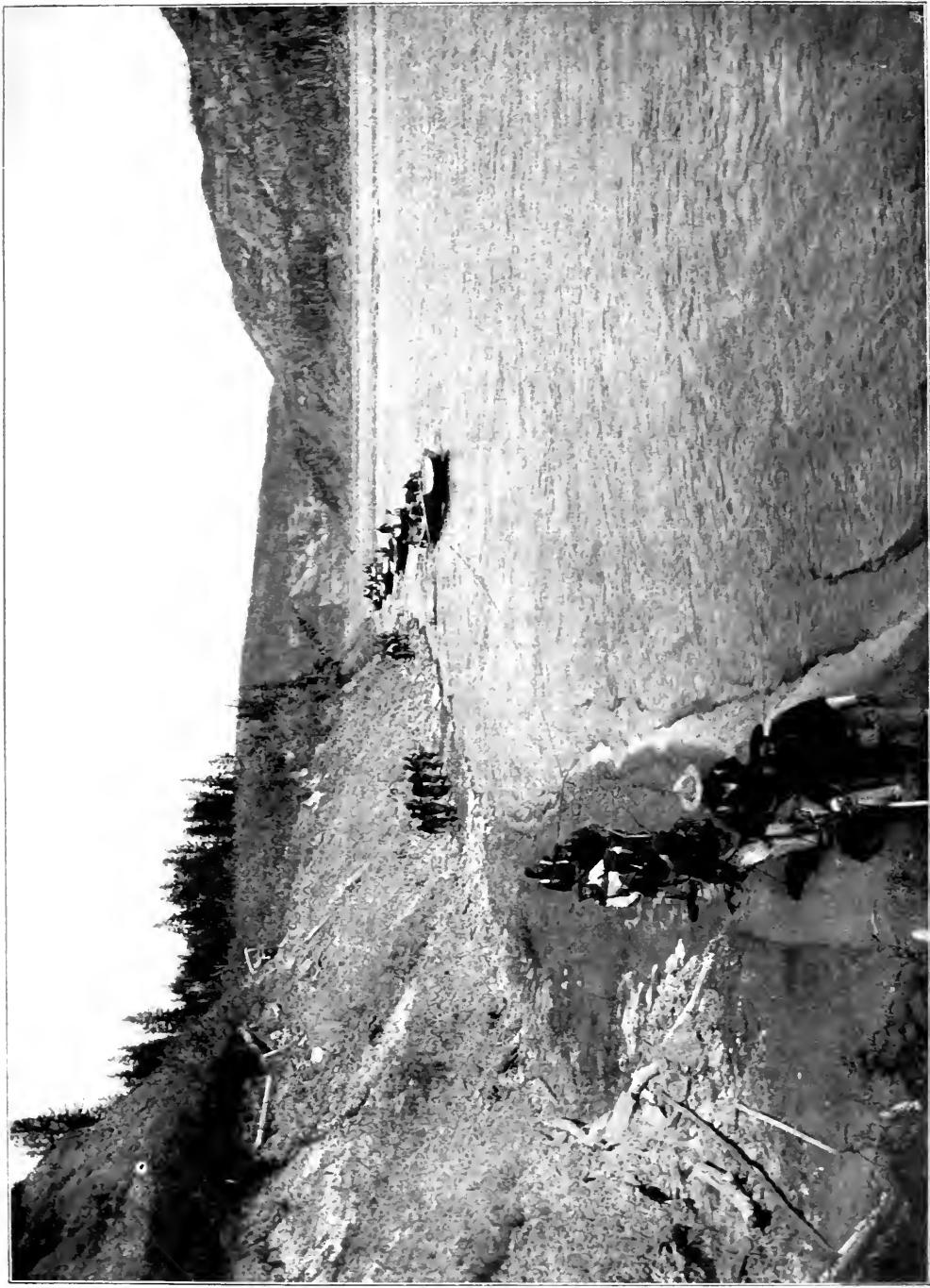
Fig. 62.

the latter represents its Ingalik (Alaskan Déné) counterpart, both after Dall. The Yukon sledge is of birch, with thin, broad runners which bend with the inequalities of the trail. As the last mentioned author remarks, there are no more nails or pins in its make up than in that of the aboriginal toboggan. The whole is lashed together by means of rawhide thongs. The dogs are harnessed two and two as in northern Siberia, with a leader, to a single line in front of the sled<sup>2</sup>.

Before taking leave of this subject, it may not be amiss to mention that in the north even dogs occasionally wear shoes. Late in the winter, the sharp granular snow soon renders their feet raw and bleeding. Hence the necessity

<sup>1</sup> "On Snow-Shoes to the Barren Grounds", p. 106.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Dall, "Travels on the Yukon", p. 166.



Tracking on Athabasca River.



of diminutive socks fitting the feet of the canines, which are tied some distance above the toes. Those shoes or socks are, however, used only in cases of necessity, and they are not themselves without their drawbacks.

### Hauling.

There a few other means of transportation among the northern Dénés. The easternmost tribes use the skin of the reindeer legs as long portmanteaus, wherein they drag their family chattels on the snow of the incipient winter. These serve as temporary sledges while on the Barren Grounds, and pending the building of the above described toboggans.

Then there is the well known travail, which the Sarcees, good imitators as are all the Dénés, duly borrowed from the Plains Indians. For such as may not be familiar with the American aboriginal technology it may be necessary to say that the travail consists in two poles lashed at one end to each side of a horse, while the other end trails on the ground, the whole being provided with a hurdle secured from pole to pole as a receptacle for a load. I have but lately seen it in use among the Sarcees.

Two other hauling operations quite common in the north call for the agency of man. I mean tracking up a waterway and portaging. The two photographs herewith reproduced are good representations of either. In the first we have four boat loads destined for the Indian trade, which are being hauled up the Athabasca River. The same tracking is often resorted to on a smaller scale by the natives themselves when they travel in summer with their family impedimenta.

Repin's great picture "The Bark-Haulers", with its expressive types of men working with degrees of energy varying according to their mental dispositions, has been pronounced "a human document, a document recording a whole world-philosophy, a philosophy applied to a terrible state of things characteristic of Russian civilization"<sup>1</sup>. I think the scene depicted in my own engraving a worthy counterpart to that of the famous Russian's work. Nay, if mere physical hardship is taken into consideration, I should say that the toil and corporal difficulties are tenfold greater in America than on the banks of the Neva, especially as the Indian has to wade to the shoulders painfully hauling his canoe load when crossing the affluences of his mighty rivers, or climbing chamois-like along the walls of their precipitous cliffs, in search of a possible footing whence to pull up his craft over the boiling waters of a rapid. In these conditions, I say that the German critic might well reserve his sympathy for the American aborigine, instead of wasting it on people whose task consists simply in dragging vessels over the smooth waters of a canal on well beaten sandy shores.

<sup>1</sup> Julius Norden, in "Literary Digest", April 28, 1906.

As to portaging, our illustration similarly shows work consequent on the advent of the whites in the country, though in the west, at least, portaging the aboriginal crafts is essentially the same and proportionately fraught with as great difficulties. Instead of a dozen men or so to drag the big boats of the traders, two or three have to do all the work inherent to hauling their own embarcations.

Again I must be allowed to suggest a comparison with a work of art many centuries old, since it is an ancient bas-relief showing a group of Assyrian workmen hauling a winged bull. Vigouroux has a small reproduction of it after Layard<sup>1</sup>, while Prof. Mason furnishes a larger fac-simile in his "Primitive Travel and Transportation"<sup>2</sup>. This well illustrates the fact that, in all ages and under all climes, like needs and aims create identical means and ways. In the Assyrian sculpture are depicted to the quick the results of intelligent cooperation through the same cross-sticks laid on the ground at the proper distances and the same harnesses or bricoles connecting each man with the main rope. Then as now man's strength was decupled by the instrumentality of levers, which, however, do not show in our own picture, as these are generally used in the rear of the object of traction.

In the east, canoes being of a much lighter material, portaging becomes correspondingly more easy. This leads us to the question of the Déné embarcations.

### Canoes and Navigation.

The habitat of the northern Dénés is as rich in water courses and lakes as that of their southern kinsmen is destitute of the same. In fact, during the fair season one can almost travel about in any direction without leaving one's canoe. Hence the usefulness, nay the necessity I might say, of that means of transportation.

The material of the eastern canoes is pretty uniformly bitch bark (*Betula papyrifera*), but west of the Rockies this is more frequently replaced by spruce bark (*Abies nigra*). As to their shape, barring the necessary differences in minor details, they resemble those of the Yakutis of eastern Siberia<sup>3</sup>. A good idea of their make can be gathered from our illustration, which represents a typical scene of Dog-Ribs on their return from a hunting expedition. The tepee poles are there, with the packs of furs, the family blankets, the strips of birch bark to repair the canoe and make household utensils, the pieces of driftwood for the next bivouac, the children here and there in characteristic disorder, and, last not least, the ubiquitous dogs that look for something to steal away.

<sup>1</sup> *La Sainte Bible polyglotte*, vol. II, p. 590. Paris 1901.

<sup>2</sup> Plate XXV.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Sir Geo. Simpson, "A Journey round the World", vol. II, pp. 283 and 323.

Mackenzie says that these canoes are small, pointed at both ends, flat bottomed and covered in the fore-part<sup>1</sup>. He adds that they are so light that the man whom one of them bears on the water can in his turn carry it over land without any difficulty. He evidently refers to the smaller kind, the single man's canoe. Our illustration at the beginning of this chapter is evidence that the larger, or family, canoes are somewhat more unwieldy. Their frame is made of slats of birch wood steamed, bent and dried. It consists of transversal ribs extending inwardly from side to side, of longitudinal bands crossing the ribs at right angles, and of laths that run along the edges, both in and out, forming the gunwales. To these are added five or six cross-bars which contribute to the solidity of the crafts. The bark pieces are used inside out, and are sewed together by means of the long, slender roots of the spruce (*wattap*), after which the seams are calked with spruce gum.

The large canoes are about sixteen feet long and will carry three men with their baggage, say six or eight hundred pounds. Each is provided with a stock of spruce gum, some extra pieces of bark and a bundle of spruce roots to repair damages on the way. The reader has not forgotten Franklin's "musquitoes". They are much in evidence all through the north, but especially along the rivers. As their company is anything but pleasant, some tribes, like the Yukon Dénés, will occasionally be found travelling with bowls of embers in their canoes to keep them off. In ancient times, when the starting of a new fire was quite an operation, this precaution was also intended to obviate the tediousness attendant upon each repetition of the process. Some sort of twisted strings of the inner bark of a few trees, which smouldered without getting extinguished, was also made to serve a like purpose.

The paddles are perhaps six feet long, over one-third of which consists of a lance-shaped blade about seven inches in its greatest width. The Dénés' way of paddling is peculiar, inasmuch as, instead of using the edge of the canoe as a partial fulcrum for the lever they have in their hands, they avoid touching it at all, and do their paddling entirely on the outside.

The canoes of the Tsötsaut were originally made with the bark of the yellow cedar (*Thuya excelsa*), and measured some eighteen feet in length. Dr. Fr. Boas says that those Indians used sails of marmot skins<sup>2</sup>, a rather remarkable statement in view of the late Dr. Brinton's declaration that the inventive faculties of the aboriginal Americans "had not reached to either oars or sails" to propel their embarcations<sup>3</sup>. Brinton seems right as regards the Dénés, for I know of none of their tribes that possesses a truly native

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 239. According to Petitot (*Autour du Grand Lac des Esclaves*, p. 268), among the Dog-Ribs and the Hares these are covered in the rear part as well, the entire craft being a copy of the Eskimo kayak (with different material), and accommodating but one person.

<sup>2</sup> Tenth Ann. Report B. A. A. S., p. 44.

<sup>3</sup> "The American Race", p. 52.

name for either<sup>1</sup>. In common with the Caribs and some of the Peruvian coast tribes, they will occasionally raise a blanket fastened to the upper ends of two poles held with both hands in the canoe. But even this I believe to be adventitious among them.

### Wooden Crafts.

Regular sails with masts are now used by the western Dénés owing to the less frail character of their embarcations. Among them "dug-outs" of balsam poplar trees (*Populus balsamea*) have replaced the original spruce bark canoe. Such crafts, when intended for use on the rivers, may almost attain thirty feet in length, with a width of not more than three in the middle. But for lake navigation they are proportionately shorter, so that they may not ship too much water when plying on heavy seas. No elegance or beauty of design about them: merely trunks of poplar hollowed out in their entirety, with about two-thirds of their diameter utilized, and the resulting upper edges forced out by means of cross-bars made gradually larger until the canoe has attained the requisite width. The same material, poplar wood, serves in making the dug-outs of the Tunguses of Siberia.

These are rather unwieldy in the water, especially as the stern is always made of the butt end of the tree; but in swift rivers strewn with rocks and other dangerous obstructions they are much safer than either the bark canoes of the east or even the elegant and capacious embarcations of the Pacific coast. As they are not more than an inch in thickness, their bottom and sides yield readily to any obstacle, and bend when the birch bark would tear and the cedar of the far west would split<sup>2</sup>.

In portages they have to be hauled in the same way as the large traders' barks, and the span of their natural life is from eight to ten years, after which, if not already shrunk out of shape, they become too soft for safety.

Some of the Pacific tribes allied to the Hupas were noted for their large and beautiful canoes. Powers saw one which was forty-four feet long, over

<sup>1</sup> Petitot gives for a sail words which mean literally canoe-stuff (as of tepees) and which may be of his own composition. At all events, the fact that they are compound words points to their more or less recent introduction. In the west, the Dénés simply say *læwɛl*, a corruption of the French *la voile*.

<sup>2</sup> Of the embarcations of the Kamchadales Richard J. Bush says in his volume "Reindeer, Dogs and Snow-Shoes" (p. 46): "Near by the fishing party, drawn up on the beach, were their canoes, like the 'dug-outs' or hollowed logs used by our American Indians for navigating lakes and rivers . . . To ensure safety when the water is rough, they lash two or more of them together, side by side, by binding light poles across the tops". These canoe rafts are quite common among the Dénés. I have repeatedly seen them used by the Babines and the Carriers, and though the canoes of the easterners are much less solid, their relative frailty does not prevent a like mode of navigation, since Hearne says that "when water is smooth and a raft of three or four of those canoes is well secured by poles lashed across them, they will carry a much greater weight in proportion . . . and this is the general mode adopted by the people of this country in crossing rivers when they have more than one canoe with them". (*Op. cit.*, p. 119.)

eight feet wide, and capable of carrying twenty-four men or five tons of freight. It was made of redwood cedar, and seemed to him a "thing of beauty", sitting plumb and lightly on the sea, and so symmetrical that a pound's weight on either side would throw it slightly out of trim<sup>1</sup>.

According to a tradition of the Navahoes, they never had anything better than rafts for navigation purposes, and even these were used only to cross rivers. The same account proceeds to describe the building of the first canoe in that tribe, which is said to have been made of a cottonwood tree hollowed out by means of fire, which was prevented from burning further than required by a judicious application of mud<sup>2</sup>. But, as we already know, that tribe can easily live and thrive in its arid land without the possession of a single canoe.

Rafts are occasionally used in the north. They are made of three dry logs bound together, with their larger ends aft, while a slightly tapering shape is given their opposite extremities. The logs are fastened together fore and aft by means of ropes, which, when of truly aboriginal make, are of twisted strips of willow bark, starting from one end of a cross-bar placed over them and going round each of the logs and the bar alternately.

Among the Loucheux, these primitive embarcations are often used in conjunction with regulars canoes. Simpson relates meeting some that served to descend the Mackenzie, carrying as they drifted along the children, women, and the family baggage. They consisted of only two logs connected at the fore-part and joined in the middle by a single bar, in the form of a capital A. A raised platform whereon the passengers sat was erected near the apex, and the men escorted these crafts in their bark canoes, which were at times conveniently secured between the projecting arms of the after-part of the rafts<sup>3</sup>.

Another means of transportation, packing, will be treated of when we describe the mechanical contrivances to which it gives rise.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. H. Hale, "Language as a Test of Mental Capacity", p. 86. *Transact. Roy. Soc. of Canada*, vol. IX, 1891.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Matthews, "Navaho Legends", p. 161.

<sup>3</sup> "Narrative of the Discoveries on the N. Coast of America", pp. 185—186.

## CHAPTER XV.

**Commerce.****Home Transactions.**

As most of the travel and transportation incidental to the life of the modern Dénés is occasioned by the fur trade, it is but natural that we should now enter into a few details concerning commerce among them. Before they were aware of the value of furs in the eyes of the whites, all their business transactions were so few and so simple that the whole system could hardly be dignified by the name of commerce. Even to-day if you make abstraction of the fur trade, scarcely anything will be left in that line save occasional bartering.

Among themselves the Dénés will not be so mean as to "sell" anything. They simply give it away. But as their great social principle is *do ut des*, it follows that their generosity is of a rather cheap kind. You express admiration for an object, and forthwith it passes into your hands and becomes your property. But you are always expected to return at least its equivalent in goods. Any one who respects himself and has a care for his reputation in the tribe will generally more than pay for that object. Nay, were an Indian desirous of making profits in an easy manner, he would simply have to bestow his belongings on people known for their generosity. But you need not broach the subject to a Déné. "We people (Dénés)", he would promptly tell you, "we are not a set of mercenaries like the whites, who speak of nothing but selling and purchasing. We simply give away our goods". As a matter of fact, a free gift without an eye to ulterior compensation is something almost unknown among them.

In case the beneficiary of these "bounties" should forget to return the compliment, he is soon reminded of his obligations through the intervention of a third person. Unless desirous of provoking a dispute, the creditor will never accost the debtor bent on mentioning such a subject. If the object offered the former through the obliging friend be not agreeable, it is mercilessly declined until something of a value at least commensurate with that of the original transaction is brought forward.

Among the Chilcotins, however, deals akin to a public sale or auction often took place when I was stationed among them. Nothing would then be more common than to see a youth entering a house, of an evening, with some object in hands, a blanket, piece of skin, snares, a belt or any other part of the wearing apparel, crying out as he came in: *ôhkhet*, buy! If any of the inmates was in need of, or took a fancy to, the proffered article, he would hand the boy what he deemed a fair equivalent for the same, which,

after due inspection by the owner of the object of barter, was either returned or kept. In the first case, it meant that it was considered insufficient or not needed, and an additional bid in the shape of some other piece of property was in order. When retained by the party for whom the messenger was acting, a bargain was thereby struck, and both objects had more or less definitely changed hands.

I say more or less, because it sometimes happened that, through the criticisms of others or owing to personal fickleness, the originator of the transaction getting dissatisfied, claimed back what he had offered for sale, with the result that, for the sake of peace and good fellowship, it was usually returned to him.

The following details will tell of the valuation put on some of the necessities or luxuries of life in the north. A dentalium breast plate, such as used in the ceremonial dances of the Carriers, was valued at four dressed moose skins or forty beaver skins. In the fall of 1771, a member of the Cariboo-Eater tribe got for a piece of iron which he had stolen at Fort Churchill as much as forty beaver skins and sixty martens from a Yellow-Knife or Dog-Rib Indian<sup>1</sup>. On June 4, 1867, W. H. Dall gave for a birch bark canoe of the larger kind, with its paddles, seven fathoms of drill, three papooshes of tobacco and five balls. The normal price of a single man's canoe he states to have been a shirt, or five marten skins<sup>2</sup>.

### **Intertribal Commerce.**

Even before the coming of the white traders, intertribal, or even international commerce was to a limited extent carried on in the north. Dressed skins and furs or other goods were bartered for oil, ivory, boot soles and the like, between the Loucheux of Alaska and the lower Mackenzie, on the one hand, and the Innuit or Eskimos on the other. Whole fleets of Yukon Dénés would regularly descend the river in quest of their heterogeneous neighbours' goods, and during the short intervals of peace between their eastern congeners and the Eskimos of the mouths of the Mackenzie, the Coppermine and the Back or Big Fish Rivers, similar exchanges of goods would also take place.

The great desideratum, however, at that early period was more generally copper, which, as we have already seen, was found in its native state on a small mountain near the stream named after it. With this hatchets, ice-chisels, awls, bayonets, knives, arrow-heads, etc. were fashioned, which commanded a high price. That the search after the precious metal had been carried on rather extensively is proved by the fact that when the first white man saw the place in 1771, it was covered with a net of well beaten tracks, some of which appeared quite old and were covered with vegetation.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Hearne, *op. cit.*, p. 207.

<sup>2</sup> "Travels on the Yukon", pp. 86 and 90.

According to the traditions of the people, the copper mine responsible for the name of the important stream to the east of the Mackenzie was discovered by a woman who, having been abused by the men she was leading thereto, vowed in revenge for the outrage to gradually deprive them of their new treasure. She was a great conjurer, and "when the men had loaded themselves with copper and were going to return, she refused to accompany them, and said she would sit on the mine till she sunk into the ground, and that the copper would sink with her. The next year, when the men went for more copper, they found her sunk up to the waist, though still alive and the quantity of copper much decreased; and on repeating their visit the year following, she had quite disappeared, and all the principal part of the mine with her"<sup>1</sup>.

In Hearne's time native copper was exchanged with even imported iron. The standard of trade was then an ice-chisel of copper for a like implement of iron, or an ice-chisel and a few arrow-heads of copper for a half worn hatchet.

In the west, the popular mind had similarly invested with mystery the finding of copper. The Carriers claim that, in times not very remote, all the Indians — themselves included — congregated at a certain point of the sea coast around a tower-like copper mountain emerging from the depths of the water. Their object was to decide which tribe should become the possessor thereof. When all had united in shouting, the mountain began gradually to totter, and the Haidas, who are blessed with big heads and strong voices, caused it to fall on their side. "Thus it was", they add, "that those Indians won the copper mountain, and ever since we have been obliged to have recourse to them for what we require of that metal to make bracelets for our wives and daughters".

Be this as it may, it is certain that it is from that quarter that the western Dénés derived all their copper in prehistoric times. It was therefrom also that, later on, they procured their stock of iron or iron goods, giving in return leather and beaver, lynx, fox and marten skins. The copper came to them in small bars of which they made dog collars, arm-bands, bracelets and tweezers. They occasionally converted it into arrow-points. To this day native copper is highly prized even on the coast, especially when fashioned into the shield-like "coppers", which are the property of the hereditary chiefs.

As to iron, the Carriers likewise received it in the shape of bars about eighteen inches long by two in width. They gave it an edge at one end, and, having fixed it to a handle at right angles, they used it as an axe. When too worn for that purpose, they made spears and arrow heads out of it. Mackenzie saw some in 1793 that originated from the sea coast and was being put to such uses.

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<sup>1</sup> Hearne, *op. cit.*, p. 175, footnote.



The Results of Modern Commerce in the North.



### Aboriginal Middlemen.

All the aboriginal tribes near the source of supply of the foreign goods soon came to act as middlemen between the skippers or traders and the natives living at a distance. So did the Eskimos of Cook's Inlet relatively to the inland Dénés of Alaska, the Tlinget with regard to the Nahanais, the Tsimpsians and the Kwakiutl in connection with the Carriers, the Chilcotins and, to a limited extent, the Sékanais. So did also the Hudson Bay tribes act towards the Dénés ranging to the northwest of their own habitats.

The opportunity to make large profits was great. They improved it without remorse. Thus the easternmost Dénés sold with a profit of a thousand per cent. to their inland congeners, the Dog-Ribs and the Yellow-Knives, hatchets for which they had themselves paid one beaver or lynx skin, or again three common marten skins. Knives and other pieces of iron-work were the occasion of similar extortion. For a small brass kettle of two pounds or two pounds and a half weight, they exacted as much as sixty martens or the value of twenty beaver skins; and if the vessels were in good order, they had the cheek to demand even more<sup>1</sup>. So that, finally, most of the furs brought to the English trading posts on the bay were derived from other interior tribes rather than from those who handed them to the white traders.

As this state of affairs was not to the advantage of the latter, since it deprived them of the furs that might otherwise have been collected by their immediate neighbours on their own hunting grounds, the English tried by means of presents and pressing invitations to coax the northerners into visiting their posts. But so interested were the middlemen in keeping them away that they did their utmost to prevent them from even hearing of the invitation tendered, intercepting and appropriating the presents sent them, and plundering such of the strangers as were audacious enough to undertake the trip.

Were it only as a means of arriving at a still better understanding of aboriginal ethics when untrammeled by the conventionalities of our civilization, I shall mention after Hearne a case which shows how filthy lucre can induce some Dénés to victimize their own congeners.

A certain Keelshies, belonging apparently to the tribe of the Cariboo-Eaters, having come upon twelve of those benighted northerners that were loaded with valuable furs, managed, in common with his followers, to pilfer all their goods, which they took in payment of provisions they sold them at exorbitant prices, after which they had the heart to force them to carry the loads which they now claimed as theirs to the Fort on the bay. On his arrival with that band, the leader Keelshies was highly praised for their coming (which he represented as the result of his intervention) by the traders who knew nothing of the previous transaction.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Hearne's Journal, *passim*.

So pleased, indeed, were they that they loaded the strangers with presents for themselves and their countrymen at home, in the hope that they would not only repeat their visit, but that many of their co-tribesmen would thereby be induced to imitate them in coming to trade at headquarters. But the poor innocent creatures, who had already been despoiled of all their furs by the greed of Keelshies and his gang, had to pay dearly for this well-meant generosity. On their way back, they were treacherously conveyed to an island, whence their goods were ferried across to the mainland by their persecutors who, after they had appropriated even those parts of their clothing which they thought worthy of their notice, went off in their canoes, leaving them to perish on the island. In 1772 Hearne saw himself the bones of those poor people.

From this inglorious occurrence the reader will no doubt gather that the *auri sacra fames* has not all its victims in the land of the Latins or their descendants.

Nor were the native middlemen on the Pacific coast much more generous in their dealings with the Nahanaïs and other Déné tribes. Not only did they cheat them shamelessly, but when commercial competition arose in the persons of the Hudson's Bay Company traders from the east, they mercilessly destroyed their forts, thereby forcing the white intruders to retire<sup>1</sup>.

For a like reason no trading post could be established within the Skeena basin, though one had for some time stood on the sea coast, not far from the mouth of the river itself. Certain clans of maritime Tsimpsians went even so far as to claim and enforce the exclusive right of trading annually with the Babines and the Sékanais, ascending the stream and one of its tributaries as far as Bear or Connolly Lake. Every summer, at the foot of the Rocher Déboulé Mountain<sup>2</sup> at the confluence of the Bulkley with the Skeena, regular fairs attended by immense crowds of Indians of Tsimpsian and Déné extraction enlivened the forest, in the course of which the maritime aborigine offered to the inlander the resources of his own habitat and personal industry, fish-oil, sea-weeds, copper goods, &c., side by side with the products of a superior civilization, iron tools, beads, silver bracelets, and the like.

### Native Currency.

In spite of the fact that much of the trading consisted in a mere exchange of goods for others of no fixed value, there was, west of the Rocky Mountains, some sort of currency in the shape of the hiaqua, or *Dentalium Indianorum*,

<sup>1</sup> Near the mouth of the Stickine, both western Nahanaïs and Tlingit are popularly known as Stickine Indians. Hence, reading that the Stickines were acting as middlemen between the white skippers and the natives of the interior, Latham thought that the Nahanaïs were thereby meant, and this erroneous idea prompted him to write of them that "in the winter they range the country in the interior for the purpose of bartering or plundering furs from the inland tribes, acting as middlemen between them and the Russian traders" ("The Native Races of the Russian Empire", pp. 295—296). Most writers on the subject have since copied Latham's mistake.

<sup>2</sup> See illustration "Rocher Déboulé" in Chapter I.

which was to the Indians of northwestern America what the famous wampum was to the eastern aborigines. This shell was known and highly prized, not only among the natives "from Northern California to Puget Sound", as the Standard Dictionary has it, but as far as Alaska, and all along the intervening coast and quite a distance into the interior. Though serving as a medium of currency, those shells were also in great demand for all kinds of ornamentation purposes, and their beautiful white colour and slightly curved form lent themselves without much difficulty to that end.

Speaking of the commercial value of the *Dentalium*, J. K. Lord expresses himself as follows: "The value of the *Dentalium* depends upon its length. Those representing the greater value are called, when strung together end to end, a 'Hi-qua'; but the standard by which the *Dentalium* is calculated to be fit for a 'Hiqua' is that twenty-five shells placed end to end must make a fathom, or six feet in length. At one time a 'Hiqua' would purchase a male slave, equal in value to fifty blankets, or about 50 pounds sterling"<sup>1</sup>.

It will appear from this quotation that, though popularly known as hiaqua shells, the *Dentalium* properly assumed that name only when strung together so as to form a continuous line of a determined length. Needless to add that their original value was many times doubled when they reached the first spurs of the Rocky Mountains, after passing through numberless hands.

Harmon says that in the Carrier and Babine tribes "they constitute a kind of circulating medium, like the money of civilized countries. Twenty of these beads they consider equal in value to a beaver's skin"<sup>2</sup>. Thos. Simpson mentions Loucheux who brought in furs to trade at Fort Good Hope, on the Mackenzie, "and were very anxious to obtain in exchange the shells called 'eyeaquaws', a sort of cowries, which in the Columbia and New Caledonia<sup>3</sup> form the native currency"<sup>4</sup>.

The Carriers call the shells *tpai*, "the white ones", and put them to all kinds of uses in connection with their ceremonial pieces of apparel. They originated in the archipelago lying between Oregon and Cape Fairweather.

Though the trading companies in Alaska, Russian, American and English concerns, furnished them to the natives at very high prices, these shells had attained the status of currency long before the appearance of the whites. Glass beads, blue, red and white, were, of course due to commerce with the pale-faced strangers and soon came into popular favour though their relative value could never compare with that of the *dentalium*.

Of all the Déné tribes the Loucheux are the fondest of that "jewelry". To be counted a chief among the Alaskans, one must possess beads to the amount of two hundred beavers. Some of them go even so far as to secrete,

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Fr. Whymper, *op. cit.*, pp. 223—224.

<sup>2</sup> "An Account", &c., p. 245.

<sup>3</sup> The land of the western Dénés.

<sup>4</sup> "Narrative" &c., p. 190.

miser-like, their stock of beads in the woods. According to Richardson, they "will not part with their furs unless they receive most of the price in beads or shells"<sup>1</sup>. That foible seems to have been common to all the Loucheux tribes, east and west. Under date February 28, 1814, W. F. Wentzel writes that, at Fort Good Hope, the Loucheux were creating an uproar on account of a deficiency of beads. "For two successive years", he says, "a pressing demand had been made for beads, it being well understood that the Loucheux tribe would scarcely trade anything else, and for the want of this, their favourite article, they preferred taking back to their tents the peltries they had brought to trade". He adds: "These Indians are moreover very clamorous and much addicted to war, and are dreaded by all the surrounding tribes, except the Esquimaux: beads, however, will pacify them"<sup>2</sup>.

### The Trading Companies.

Wentzel who wrote thus of the Loucheux' appetite for beads was a trader of Norwegian origin, but representing at the confluence of the Liard and Mackenzie Rivers the interests of the North-West Fur Trading Company. This is not the place to write its history or an account of its advent into the land of the Dénés. Suffice it to say for the present that it was formed in 1783 by gentlemen hailing from eastern Canada, but had been preceded in the far east by the "Governor and Company of Adventurers of England trading into Hudson's Bay", better known the world over as the Hudson's Bay Company. This had been incorporated as early as 1670; but for a long time it had remained stationary on the frozen shores of its inland sea. Harassed by the hostility of the French, who took and pillaged several of its forts, and pursued by the fear of the interior tribes who were sympathetic to its hereditary enemies, the French, because these had representatives amongst them in the persons of the famous *courreurs des bois*, adventurous Canadians who left a posterity of mixed blood, the Hudson's Bay Company did not yet count a single inland post in Hearne's time (1772).

In fact, it required the dash and enterprise of the new Canadian corporation to induce it to throw off its secular torpor and leave its icy quarters on the Bay to establish new forts, generally by the side of those of its younger rival. Hence, for some time, the Dénés were favoured in several places with two, sometimes three, trading houses representing as many conflicting interests<sup>3</sup>. This circumstance besides demoralizing the Indians by the copious intoxicating libations to which each party resorted in order to gain the upper hand, contributed to give to furs fictitious values, which nearly ruined the trading companies themselves. The result was a compromise which merged, in 1821,

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 392.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Les Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest*, vol. I, p. 110.

<sup>3</sup> The third was the result of a split of short duration in the original N. W. Co.

the two factions into one corporation under the old name of Hudson's Bay Company<sup>1</sup>.

The timid, slow, honest and conservative Englishman, Samuel Hearne, was as typical a Hudson's Bay Company man as the Scotch Alexander Mackenzie was afterwards a true representative of the North-West Company, fearless, dashing and ever ready for adventures and glory.

Since the amalgamation of the two companies, the resulting corporation has, until a late date, enjoyed a monopoly of the fur trade in the north of Canada, where it still counts fully 120 posts<sup>2</sup>, or forts, as they are called. These are to-day nothing else than groups of two or three houses. As a rule, there is one for the officer in charge and his clerks, when he has any; another for the servants, and a third which serves as a store, while in more important places a still larger building does duty as a warehouse. The officers are generally whites, sometimes half-breeds, and the servants either belong to the latter class, or are more or less pure blooded Indians.

But among the most turbulent tribes, such as the western Dénés, the Loucheux, Eskimos and Crees, the trading posts were originally, and remained for long, real forts, with wooden palisades and bastions furnished with ordnance pieces and smaller arms. Fort Churchill, on Hudson Bay, was even entirely of stone, very strongly built and well ammunitioned. Fort St. James, on Stuart Lake among the Carriers, was a fair specimen of a Hudson's Bay Company post, down to some forty years ago.

In Alaska, the traders were at first Russians in the employ of the Russian American Company, which originated in Siberia with the energetic Baranov as its real founder. Most of its white servants were ex-convicts who worked, when not drunk, by the side of a number of eastern Asiatics<sup>3</sup>. As a consequence of the transfer of the country to the United States, that concern wound up in 1866/1867, leaving the Alaska Commercial Company (an American corporation) mistress of the field, with the exception of one or two outposts of the Hudson's Bay Company situated in the basin of the upper Yukon.

### **Trading with Profits.**

After all, the latter has remained the great fur trading corporation in North America. Its stores contain an assortment of such necessities of ab-

<sup>1</sup> By a strange slip of the pen Petitot writes in his interesting volume *Autour du Grand Lac des Esclaves* (p. 85) that the two rival companies were united and pacified by J. Franklin. This arctic explorer had nothing to do in the transaction. The Hon. Edward Ellice contributed more than anybody else toward the attainment of that happy result.

<sup>2</sup> In 1872 it still had 144.

<sup>3</sup> According to Henry W. Elliott ("A Report upon the Condition of Affairs in the Territory of Alaska", pp. 43—44), the headmen of that company were officers of the imperial fleet, who lived in official rotation at Sitka, surrounded by a troop of subordinates, with fourteen or fifteen vessels at their disposal. Without counting the women, there were, in January, 1863, as many as 586 pure whites, 944 half-breeds and 2,310 Aleuts or Kurileans in its service.

original life as muskets and ammunition, axes and knives, kettles and fryingpans, blankets and clothing, canvas to make tents and cheap cotton prints to convert into dresses, besides tea and sugar and the indispensable tobacco. Of late years, competition has also forced the traders to supply food stuffs, such as flour in small quantities, bacon and beans, rice, and the like.

We read of the Tatars that "ils sont tous comme des enfants. Quand ils arrivent dans les endroits de commerce, ils ont envie de tout ce qu'ils voient. Ordinairement ils n'ont pas d'argent, mais . . . on leur donne les marchandises à crédit"<sup>1</sup>. This is true to the letter of the Dénés. If there is in the world a man who needs a good dose of patience, it is the Indian trader. A single person will waste hours in asking for and looking over all kinds of articles, soliciting the advice of his friends when this is not spontaneously proffered—a rare occurrence if there is any bystander of his race, and the Indian hardly ever goes alone to trade. Then comes the bargaining, and the bickering at the price of the merchandise or the value put on his own furs. For the Déné is a keen observer, and he has so long been treated as a child that, not only does he now want full value for his goods and a low quotation for the wares of the trader, but, remembering the incredibly low prices paid him for furs in by-gone days, he is ever tempted to see an attempt at imposition in any statement to the effect that, as a result of the fluctuations of the market, peltries have decreased in value.

From the foregoing the reader will understand that, even in those so-called trading posts, no business transaction goes on but bartering. The Indian hands in his furs, and the trader gives goods in exchange. Useless to point out the fact that this furnishes the latter with splendid opportunities for realizing handsome profits, inasmuch as he may gain both on the goods he sells by overestimating them, and the peltries he buys by undervaluation. That he does, or did, so with a vengeance the following quotations will amply show.

In June 1742, this was the tariff on Hudson Bay: — A pound of gunpowder sold for four beavers; a fathom of twisted tobacco, for seven; a pound of shots, for one; a yard of coarse cloth, for fifteen; a blanket, for twelve; two fish-hooks, for one; a gun, for twenty-five; an axe, for four; a shirt, for seven, and a gallon of brandy, for four<sup>2</sup>.

Just think of it: two fish-hooks for a beaver skin, or, at the present valuation of furs, about four dollars for an object whose original cost may have been a quarter of a cent! No wonder, then, if Arthur Dobbs, from whom I borrow the above quotations, cannot help remarking by way of comment that, even under the circumstances and with standards different from those of our days, everything was then sold "at a monstrous profit, even to 2000 per

<sup>1</sup> *Souvenirs d'un Voyage*, vol. I, p. 202.

<sup>2</sup> Dobbs, "An Account of the Countries adjoining to Hudson's Bay", p. 43.

cent". When the reader furthermore learns that, according to the same author, two fleets of canoes carried about 20.000 beavers, while some 30.000 more were derived from other Indians (without mentioning over 9000 martens), he will form some idea of the immense profits realized at the expense of the poor Indian.

Coming to more recent years, Dr. King tells us that "three marten-skins are obtained for a coarse knife, the utmost value of which, including the expense of conveying it to those distant regions, cannot be estimated at more than sixpence, and three of these skins were sold last January 1836 in London for three guineas. With the more expensive furs, such as the black fox, or sea-otter, the profit is more than tripled; and but a few years ago a single skin of the former species sold for fifty guineas, while the native obtained in exchange the value of two shillings"<sup>1</sup>.

### Modern Currency of the Fur Trade.

Originally and for quite a long time, the standard of currency between the white traders and their dusky customers was the beaver skin. All the other peltries were graded in proportion of their relative value compared to that of the beaver. Thus a silver fox may have been worth ten beaver skins, a bear five, and a muskrat a fifth of one, or less. For his silver fox the native hunter would then get in goods ten times more than a beaver would bring, half as much for a bear skin, and so forth. This standard came to be known as a Made Beaver (abbreviated M. B.), or a Skin, to the English, while the French called it a *pelu*.

As to the intrinsic value of that Made Beaver and its relation to the known monetary standards, this was a question left entirely to the discretion of the traders. Both varied, therefore, according to the times and the localities. In the east and far northwest, till a very late date a Made Beaver was supposed to correspond to half a dollar or two shillings<sup>2</sup>. At this rate of exchange here is the tariff obtaining at Fort Resolution, on Great Slave Lake, as late as 1864:

	10 M. B. or dollars	
Black Fox . . . . .	5.—	
Cross Fox . . . . .	2.—	
Common Fox . . . . .	.50	
Marten . . . . .	.50	
Otter . . . . .	2.—	
Mink . . . . .	1.—	
Wolf . . . . .	.50	
Bear . . . . .	2.—	
Musk-Ox . . . . .	2.—	
Wolverine . . . . .	1.50	
Lynx . . . . .	1.—	
Muskrat . . . . .	.18	
Beaver (standard) . . . . .	.50 <sup>3</sup>	

<sup>1</sup> "Narrative of a Journey to the Shores of the Arctic Ocean", vol. II, p. 53—54.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Petitot *Monographie*, p. XXVI; *Autour du Gd. L. des Esclaves*, p. 65; Dall, "Travels on the Yukon", p. 104; Whymper, *op. cit.*, p. 226; Tyrrell, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

<sup>3</sup> These figures are after Petitot, *Autour du Gd. L. des Esclaves*, p. 67.

Gradually, however, this trade unit became more and more conventionalized. It has even come to lose so much of its original meaning that in places a beaver skin is reputed to be worth several Made Beavers. True, as late as 1893, Whitney still sets it down at fifty cents<sup>1</sup>; but among the Carriers, Babines and Sékanais its value has long hovered between sixty and seventy cents, until to-day we have the anomaly of beaver skins being evaluated at six or seven Made Beavers, that is, about four dollars in Canadian money.

The reason of this lies in the altered proportions in the kinds of furs now on the market. The beaver, a sedentary animal which is easily killed, is to-day practically verging towards extinction, while the ranks of the more nomadic denizens of the woods have not been materially thinned. As I write, a beaver skin is worth about half that of a bear, fully as much as that of an otter, and more than that of a lynx. Therefore, with the new valuation based on its present rarity, if we were to take the beaver for the unit of trade currency as it was still in 1864, a bear would now be worth only two skins instead of four as forty years ago; an otter would be valued at only one skin instead of four, and a lynx would bring less than one instead of two.

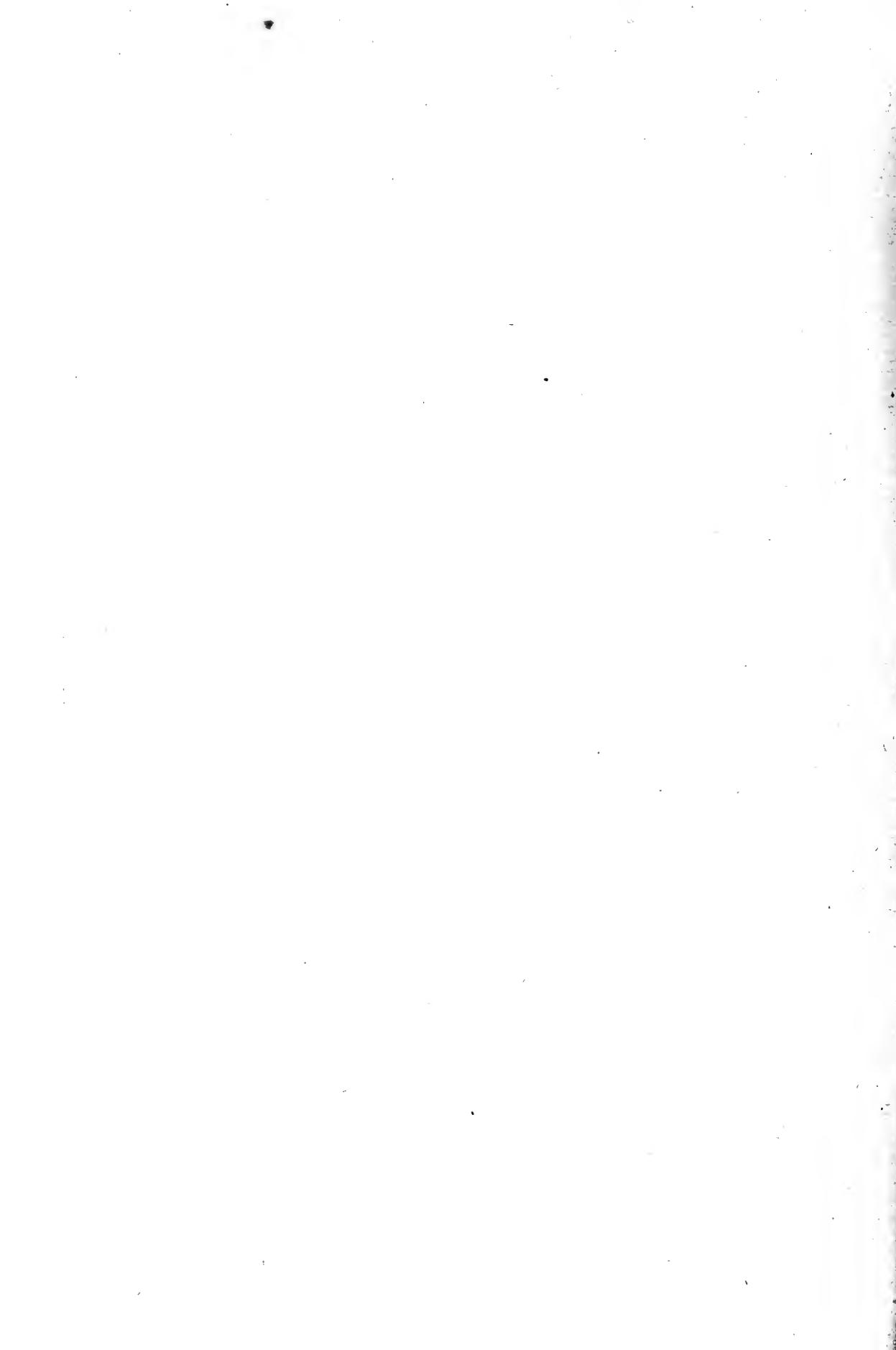
This trade currency was represented by tokens or reminders given the hunter, when he did not immediately spend the entire value of his furs in actual purchases. These were either English farthing pieces with H. B. C. stamped thereon, or cheap coins specially issued for the trade and bearing in bold figures the number of M. B. they represented. More lately, mere cardboard squares with the stamp of the Company have been made to serve the same end.

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<sup>1</sup> *Ubi supra.*



H. B. Co's Transport loaded with Fur. (Fort Smith, Slave River.)



## CHAPTER XVI.

### Puberty customs.

#### Menstruation and its Consequences in Antiquity.

"The woman who, at the return of the month, hath her issue of blood, shall be separated seven days. Every one that toucheth her, shall be unclean until the evening. And every thing that she sleepeth on, or that she sitteth on in the days of her separation, shall be defiled. He that toucheth her bed shall wash his clothes: and being himself washed with water, shall be unclean until the evening. Whosoever shall touch any vessel on which she sitteth, shall wash his clothes; and himself being washed with water, shall be defiled until the evening."<sup>1</sup>

These stringent prescriptions of the Mosaical Law are well known, and that they were strictly observed among the posterity of Jacob there can be no reasonable doubt. But, apart from the well understood sanitary considerations that prompted them, the fidelity with which they were followed was, in part at least, consequent on the fact that they were apparently but an official consecration of sentiments and customs which prevailed long before Moses' time. The state of a menstruating woman must, indeed, have been extremely repulsive to the inhabitants of Mesopotamia, since when Laban, furious at the disappearance of his family idols, was looking for the same among the goods of his daughters, one of whom, Rachel, had taken them away, it sufficed for her to sit upon them and say quietly: "it has now happened to me according to the custom of women"<sup>2</sup> to send her father away, and avert from her head the sentence of death which had implicitly been pronounced against her by her husband.

Among the Jews of old, puberty gave rise to at least five distinct observances. First, the woman in her menses was legally impure, and all contact with her entailed defilement. Second, she was sequestered from the company of men. Third, even at the expiration of her menstrual discharges, she remained in a state of mitigated seclusion until the time of her marriage. Fourth, she had then to wear a special costume whenever she went out; and, lastly, she was under the guardianship of a close relative, who was responsible for her conduct and whose duty it was to avenge any wrong done her.

The first two points are so clearly mentioned in the above quoted texts from Leviticus that we need not insist thereon.

That, independently from her menstrual periods, the Jewish maiden remained till her marriage a being apart, who must associate only with persons

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<sup>1</sup> Levit., XV, 19—23.

<sup>2</sup> Gen., XXXI, 35.

of her own class seems also certain. The very name of a virgin in Hebrew, *תְּבִלָּה helmah*, or hidden away, should suffice to prove it. A virgin in the eyes of a Jew was not necessarily one that was pure in mind and body, since the sacred text sometimes finds it necessary to mention that the person referred to by that name was "not known to man"<sup>1</sup>. The term was applied to any girl who, having reached the age of puberty, was living in special apartments unfrequented by man, as long as she remained single. For instance, Amnon, who entertained a criminal passion for his sister Thamar, deplored the fact that, as she was a virgin, he could not even see her, and therefore found it difficult to gratify his evil inclinations<sup>2</sup>. Moreover, when Heliodorus came to Jerusalem in order to despoil the temple of its treasures, Holy Writ gives it as a token of the extraordinary commotion the event occasioned among the people that even "the virgins that were *shut up* came forth, some to Onias, and some to the walls, and others looked out of the windows"<sup>3</sup>.

As regards the apparel proper to those virgins, Dom Calmet says that they had to be veiled, and could be seen only by their nearest of kin<sup>4</sup>. The erudite Benedictine does not adduce any proof of his assertion; but we need not go far to find it. Flavius Josephus states expressly that, in the time of David, maidens wore loose coats "tied at the hands and let down to the ankles that the inner coats might not be seen"<sup>5</sup>. According to St. Jerome, this part of the feminine costume consisted in a summer veil, which covered the whole body, including the head, in front of which was an opening for the eyes, after the fashion of that of the modern oriental ladies<sup>6</sup>.

If we understand the Bible aright, however, this ample vestment was hardly a veil, since we read of Thamar that "she was clothed with a long robe (*posim* in Hebrew), for the king's daughters that were virgins used such kinds of garments"<sup>7</sup>. But it was an outer and secondary piece of apparel, that could be dispensed with without violating the laws of propriety, since, after she had been abused by her brother, Thamar rent it and went out with the evident purpose of showing that her virginity had been destroyed in the same way as the external token of it was now torn.

It was no doubt with this outer garment that Rebecca covered herself at the sight of her future father-in-law<sup>8</sup>. Though above all a badge of maidenly modesty, it was nevertheless in a sense the equivalent of the *prætexta*, of the Romans, a token of maturity, and as much a sign of the eligibility of the

<sup>1</sup> Gen., XXIV, 16; Num., XXXI, 17.

<sup>2</sup> II Kings, XXIII, 2.

<sup>3</sup> II Macc., III, 19.

<sup>4</sup> *Dictionnaire de la bible*, Art. Vierge, Toulouse, 1783.

<sup>5</sup> "Antiquities of the Jews", book VIII, chap. VIII.

<sup>6</sup> Hier. in Isai., III.

<sup>7</sup> II Kings, XIII, 18.

<sup>8</sup> Gen., XXIV, 65.

wearer for marriage as the frequentation of the *olag*, or communal house of the unmarried girls, is of the modern Igorots of the Philippine Islands<sup>1</sup>.

To return to the Jewish maidens, I have said that they were entrusted to the guardianship of some near relatives. Thus, according to Josephus, Rebecca says to Abraham's servant: "Laban is my brother who, together with my mother, takes care of all our family affairs, and is the *guardian* of my virginity"<sup>2</sup>. Again, after mentioning the massacre of all the Benjamites of either sex with the exception of six hundred men, the same historian says that the Israelites repented when they saw the consequence of their act, which was to be the extinction of the entire tribe of Benjamin. Therefore they allowed the survivors to take to wives "four hundred virgins that had not known the bed of man"<sup>3</sup>, as the Scripture has it, adding that, should the maidens' parents resent the high-handedness of the proceeding, "they will tell them that they were themselves the cause of what had happened, by neglecting to *guard* their daughters"<sup>4</sup>. Furthermore, Josephus gives as one of the reasons why Amnon could not violate his sister "the *custody* she was under"<sup>5</sup>.

### Jewish customs among the Déné Maidens.

If we now turn to the Déné girls, we shall be confronted by exactly the same five ritual points which, in the west at least, are just as strictly observed as among the Jews. In the first place, the Dénés have no more proper name for a virgin than the Hebrews of old. The latter, as we have seen, called such a person one hidden away, *helmah*; to the Carriers the same is *sak-œsta*, one that stays apart. This is so true, and the deficiency of the language is so glaring in this respect that, when designating the Blessed Virgin by that appellation, the missionary must explain to the natives that Mary was not a virgin in their own sense of the word, that is, simply an unmarried young woman sequestered from the world by the will of her parents and the custom of her people, but one who never *knew* man, to use the Biblical expression, which is also current in all the Déné dialects.

As to menstruation, let it be well understood that, in the eyes of our Indians, a woman affected thereby is the very incarnation of evil, a plague to be avoided at all costs, a being with whom all contact, however innocent and indirect, entails exceedingly dreadful consequences. The very name of the menstrual discharge is in Carrier as synonymous with evil as it can be. The westerners call it *hwotsi*, while they designate evil as *hwotsi*; with a desinential hiatus.

As soon as the first symptoms of puberty make their appearance, the young girl is mercilessly secluded from all company, even that of her parents. At

<sup>1</sup> A. E. Jenks: "The Bontoc Igorot", p. 66. Manila, 1905.

<sup>2</sup> "Antiquities of the Jews", book I, chap. XVI.

<sup>3</sup> Judges, XXI, 12.

<sup>4</sup> *Ubi supra*, book V, chap. II.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, book VII, chap. VIII.

a distance from the habitations a small hut is hastily made for her, wherein she has to dwell until the menstrual flow is well over. She is visited only by a female relative, her mother or maternal grandmother, who daily takes to her the meagre fare customary under the circumstances. The girl has to lie down as long as possible, eat as little as she can, and only of dried food. The comestions, while in her impure state, of the flesh (especially of the head) of any animal, fish or land game, that but lately enjoyed the sweets of life could not but irritate its surviving fellows, which would not fail to resent so grievous an insult by avoiding the traps, snares, arrows or bullets of all the relatives of the guilty party. She must content herself with some bits of dry fish and a few berries, and the greater is her abstinence from food the longer and more enjoyable will be her after life.

While in that state of strict confinement, she is called *a-šta*, "she that stays in a hole", a term which seems to imply even more absolute seclusion in primordial times, unless it be taken to mean that the girl is now so much hidden from view that she is practically dead and buried. The word is the equivalent of that by which the Chinese maiden is known among her own people when, banished at twelve from all companionship, she becomes "the girl who sits in the house".

Nor is this all. By reason of the excessively malign influences whereof she is possessed, the Déné girl is strictly forbidden to walk in the beaten tracks, go out to fetch her own fire-wood or water, bathe or even wash herself in the streams and lakes, for fear she would cause the death of the fish or prevent her people from taking any. Above all, she must avoid touching anything belonging to man, especially his hunting implements, which would be thereby defiled and entirely unfitted for the capture of game. She must keep away from the tracks of the same; nay, she is debarred from even crossing the trail whereon "the head of a deer, moose, beaver, and many other animals have lately been carried, either on a sledge or on the back"<sup>1</sup>. She must not go near the places where fish-nets are set or beaver is being trapped, and in Hearne's time she could not even walk over the ice of the lakes and streams. Is not this following the Mosaical code with a vengeance?

The same seclusion, accompanied by identical observances and restrictions, recurred with every following menstruation, even after marriage.

After her catamenial course, walking in the steps of her Jewish prototype, the Déné virgin or *sak-aéstá* undergoes a mitigated seclusion. At night she sleeps in the partitioned space in the corner of the house, or close by the pillow of her father<sup>2</sup>. She is carefully watched, and when going out she wears

<sup>1</sup> S. Hearne, *op. cit.*, p. 315.

<sup>2</sup> "A *taneza* had a daughter, and she was a virgin. He made her pass every night quite close to his pillow, for he was rearing her with the greatest care" ("Three Carrier Myths", by the writer; Trans. Can. Inst., vol. V, p. 28). Everybody knows that the myths of a people are a perfect mirror representing to the life its past social habits.

(or at least wore till a comparatively late date) the exact counterpart of the Jewish girl's veil or robe.

This was in the far east "a kind of veil or curtain made of beads", according to Hearne, who adds that it was used as a mark of modesty, because the persons that wore it were then considered marriageable<sup>1</sup>.

In the west it was a much more elaborate affair, consisting in a garment which combined in itself the purposes of a veil, a bonnet and a mantlet. It was of tanned skin, and its forepart was cut out into a long fringe, which partially concealed from view the face and breasts. Then it formed on the head a close fitting cap or bonnet, and finally fell in a broad band almost to the heels. This head-dress or veil was made and publicly imposed on the head of the maiden by a paternal aunt, who received at once some present from the girl's father.

This garment was proper to those who "stay apart" (*sak-æšta*) in the same way as the *posim* was the apanage of the Jewish *helmah*, or hidden ones. In both cases it was discarded on contracting marriage.

### Proofs.

It requires a long stay among the Indians and some familiarity with their languages to notice such customs and thoroughly understand the why and wherefore of the same, as they are naturally averse to explaining them to strangers. We cannot, therefore, expect mere travellers to remark them, or at least to realize their true import. Of all those which I have just described I have been myself a witness, except as regards the maidenly veil, which all the Indians of a certain age remember vividly. Were my own testimony impugned, I could still point to Hearne, who is quite explicit on those points<sup>2</sup>. Harmon expressly mentions the virgins' outer dress, which in his time (*circa* 1812) consisted of "a kind of veil or fringe [worn] over the eyes, made either of strung beads or of narrow strips of deer skin garnished with porcupine quills"<sup>3</sup>. He adds that "while of this age [the wearers] are not allowed to eat any thing, excepting the driest food; and especially they may not eat the head of any animal. If they should, their relations, as they imagine, would soon languish and die"<sup>4</sup>.

George Keith, an old trader familiar with the particularities of aboriginal life, writes of the Beaver women: "A woman in her menses lodges alone, and never stirs from her lodge. When decamping, she must walk behind and drop now and then branches of trees on the road, to give notice to any one

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 314—315.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 313—315 and *passim*.

<sup>3</sup> "An Account of the Indians living West of the Rocky Mountains", p. 246.

<sup>4</sup> There was indeed a fear for the safety of the woman's relatives; but she was more concerned with their prospects as hunters, owing to the peculiar notions entertained with regard to the brute creation.

who might happen to fall upon the same road, in order to prevent strangers from having sore legs, and make them avoid this route<sup>1</sup>."

Petitot has also the following concerning the natives of the Great Bear Lake basin: "Je m'aperçus que l'on poussait encore, chez eux, jusqu'à la barbarie la loi de la séquestration des femmes malades; car je vis, hors du camp, une cabane en branchages qui ne contenait pas moins de cinq de ces pauvres infirmes, auxquelles il était absolument défendu de franchir le seuil pour couper du bois, aller chercher de l'eau ou de la nourriture, de crainte qu'elles ne souillassent les chemins par leur contact, et ne procurassent aux hommes des maladies, et surtout la mort. Elles se montrèrent toutes honteuses de voir que je ne craignis pas d'aller les visiter dans leur cahute, de leur donner la main et de converser avec elles<sup>2</sup>."

But perhaps the most characteristic testimony I can furnish is that of Captain Back. It is so much the more valuable as the explorer relates the occurrence without realizing that the cause of the whole trouble lay in the fact that the woman he speaks of was experiencing her catamenial discharge. Here are his own words.

"A middle-aged woman, with a girl about six years old, came to us in great consternation, seeking protection against a hunter, over whose gun she had unluckily stept during the night. On discovering what she had done, which, in the opinion of an Indian, would destroy the qualities of the gun and prevent its killing, she was so alarmed for the consequences of her crime, that, though attached to the man, she preferred flight to the chance of what his fury might inflict on her. However, after allowing a reasonable time for the evaporation of his passion, she returned; and as he had, fortunately for her, shot an animal with the same gun since the disaster, she was let off with a sound thrashing, and an admonition to be more careful for the future. This, according to Indian law, was most lenient, as the unhappy female guilty of such delinquency seldom or ever escapes with a slighter punishment than a slit nose, or a bit cut off the ears<sup>3</sup>."

### Other Puberty Customs.

The age of puberty may be considered either as a legal limit based more or less on the law of nature and regulating social advantages and obligations, or as a period of transition when the child really passes into manhood or womanhood. Viewed from either standpoint, it varies not a little according to the codes of the different countries, as well as relatively to the habitat, climate and mode of life. Among the ancient Romans, that momentous change in the human being was deemed to take place between the fourteenth and

<sup>1</sup> Letter dated 28 Feb. 1810 (in Masson's work, vol. II, p. 91).

<sup>2</sup> *Exploration du Gd. L. des Ours*, p. 193.

<sup>3</sup> "Narrative of the Arctic Land Expedition", etc., pp. 213—214.

the sixteenth year. The young Athenians were supposed to reach that age only at eighteen, while the Hebrew boys were regarded as pubescent at thirteen. Six months thereafter the latter were bound by all the laws that affected adults.

As to the Dénés, Dall places at twelve or fourteen the age of puberty among the Alaskans<sup>1</sup>. According to Hearne, some of the eastern girls have their first menses in their thirteenth year, while others are still reckoned children at sixteen<sup>2</sup>. But Harmon is evidently astray when he says that the virginal dress is worn "from the age of eight to eleven"<sup>3</sup>. I should think fifteen a good average for the dawn of womanhood among the western Déné girls.

Over and above the Jewish observances noted in our last section, superstition was responsible for quite a few more in the west. Before we enumerate them, we may well ask ourselves if the impromptu distribution of clothes by the father of a girl reaching puberty could not be regarded as a feeble echo of another ordinance of Leviticus, which has transmitted in a form slightly disfigured by time and peculiar social conditions the Mosaical obligation of making an offering to wipe out any legal uncleanness incurred<sup>4</sup>. The Déné father certainly thought that he shared the uncleanness of his daughter, in the same way as the progenitor of twins deemed himself unclean after the birth of the latter, and this offering of property, not to a priest who did not exist, but to the assembled community which represented the tribe, was, to use the expression current among the Carriers, intended to "wash out his shame".



Fig. 63.

Upon attaining womanhood, the girl's fingers, wrists and legs at the ankles and immediately below the knees were encircled, in the latter tribe, with ornamental rings and bracelets of sinew intended as a protection against the terrible influences of which she had become possessed.

Moreover, to avoid contact with the vessel containing the water she drank and, at the same time, be the more inclined to curtail the quantity of the same, the pubescent maid had to use a tube made of a swan bone (fig. 63). A neglect of this observance was considered tantamount to courting serious

<sup>1</sup> "Travels on the Yukon", p. 202.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 315.

<sup>3</sup> "An Account", &c., *loc. cit.*

<sup>4</sup> *Lev.*, V.

throat complaints. Nor was she permitted, while in her impure state, even to touch her own head, the seat of her mind and thoughts. To prevent immediate contact with her fingers, she wore suspended at her necklace or belt, along with the drinking tube, a sort of two-pronged comb or rather scratcher, a little implement of wood which affected the shape of fig. 64<sup>1</sup>.

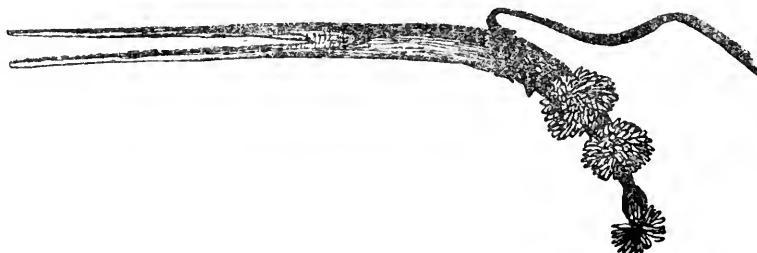


Fig. 64.

This last was common to both pubescent girls and boys. The latter also tied cords of sinews wound with swan's down at the wrists and around each leg, as in the case of the girls, which they wore for the space of one year, after which they were regarded as having reached the state of manhood. A faithful observance of this rite guarded them against precocious infirmities, and prepared them for an active life and success in the chase.

To return to the weaker sex. It was at the time of puberty that the piercing of the lower lip was first practised, preparatory to receiving the labret among the Babines. When, after the insertion of several pieces of bone gradually enlarged, the resulting hole was of the required size, the labret proper, a plug of bone or hard wood, was inserted therein. This Harmon quaintly says had "the shape of the wheel of a pulley". He adds that "as the girls grow up, this wheel is enlarged, so that a woman of thirty years of age will have one nearly as large as a dollar. This they consider adds much to their beauty; but these wheels are certainly very inconvenient, and to us they appear very uncouth and disagreeable"<sup>2</sup>.

I agree with the old fur-trader. A wheel may come very handy when in its proper place; but to have one in the lip must, indeed, have been "very inconvenient". Pity the slaves of fashion, ancient and modern.

Among the Hare Indians, when a girl had attained the age of puberty, her mother would tell her: "If anything of a troubling character should happen to you, put on your cape and hood, and lie down". As soon as she had her first flow, she would therefore cover her head and go off in a hurry to the

<sup>1</sup> I have never seen the scratcher in use; but the drinking tube was to a late date quite common among the Babines. It was made of the larger wing bones of swans.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 266. The labret was also worn by some Yukon tribes (Dall, "Masks and Labrets", p. 151).

hut erected for her, as was customary with the other tribes. One of the observances peculiar to the Hares was that, apart from the bonnet or hood proper to her condition<sup>1</sup>, she was made to wear two sticks crossed on her breasts. She was to avoid breaking any rabbit bone, and for a whole month she had to abstain from eating the heart and blood of all animals, as well as from fish-roe and fat<sup>2</sup>.

### Among the Pacific and Southern Dénés.

The puberty customs of the Tsœtsaut, that remnant of a Déné tribe now stationed on Portland Inlet, vary somewhat from those above enumerated, though they testify to the same dread of the malign forces inherent to menstruation. According to Dr. Boas, when one of their girls reaches maturity, she wears a neck-ring of crab-apple twigs, earrings of bone and a piece of a rib around the neck, as amulets to secure good luck and a long life. But the most important part of her apparel is the equivalent of the Jewish veil, which seems to have been converted by that band into a large skin hat, which comes down over the face. They claim that if she should expose her face to the sun or to the sky, it would rain, an opinion which betrays a notable deviation from the original notions of the Dénés.

This hat protects also her face against the fire, which must not strike her skin, so that she has to wear skin mittens as a protection for the hands. She keeps the tooth of an animal in her mouth to prevent her teeth from getting hollow. For a whole year she must not see blood unless her face is blackened; else she would get blind.

The hat is worn for two years, during which the girl lives in a hut by herself, though she is permitted to see others. After that period, a man takes the hat off from her head and throws it away<sup>3</sup>.

Among the Hupas, the customs attending the dawn of womanhood betray a further derogation from the original observances, to the extent of not only allowing, but prescribing baths in the rivers for persons having their first catamenial course. These baths are accompanied by ceremonies, and the event is the occasion of dances minutely described by Goddard<sup>4</sup>. But even there we have the enforced seclusion, which lasts ten days, the maidenly veil of many strands, which are in that tribe of maple bark, the penitential abstinence, and the numberless precautions against touching the face or hair with the hands. This last point implies, of course, the ceremonial scratcher, which

<sup>1</sup> Fr. Petitot calls it a *capulet*.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Petitot, *Traditions Indiennes du Canada Nord-Ouest*, pp. 247—249.

<sup>3</sup> Tenth Rep. on the N. W. Tribes of Canada, p. 45. Among the Carriers, the virginal veil was taken off by the same aunt who had put it on the girl's head.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 53.

in this case takes the form of a single piece of bone or horn usually worn at the neck (fig. 65).

The chronicler of these practices does not explain their real intent. That it is identical with that of the corresponding customs in the north is evident from the wording of a mystical formula recited on subsequent menstruations

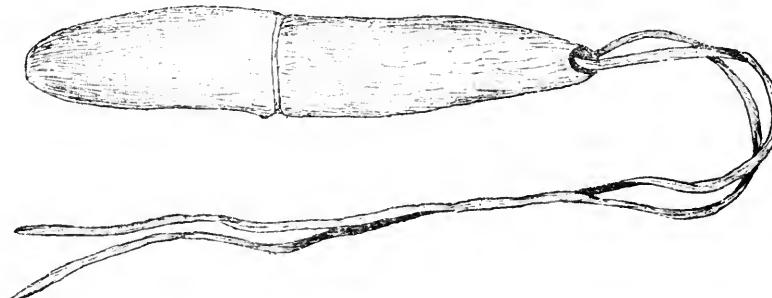


Fig. 65.

in order to shorten to eight days the period of seclusion enjoined on the woman. On the night of the eighth day from the beginning of her course, she makes a small pool by the river to be used as a bath-room, and repeats a long formula wherein, after marking a cross with a charred acorn on her right arm, she says: "He will hunt deer without harm if he does eat what I leave", and again: "He who eats what I leave will kill deer the same as ever<sup>1</sup>."

Among the Apaches of the far south, we find the very same scratching stick and drinking tube or reed as mentioned above. The accompanying fig. 66, copied from Capt. John G. Bourke's "Medicine-Men of the Apache", represents both.

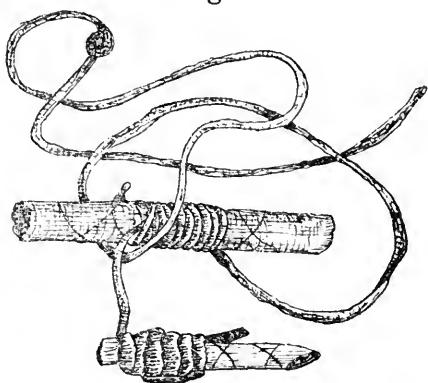


Fig. 66.

In his erudite paper, the author quotes on their object and intent opinions which are, to say the least, amusing, and betray a remarkable ignorance of the mentality peculiar to the Indian. Thus, speaking of the scratcher, Kane declares that a Cree dares not scratch his head "without compromising his dignity"<sup>2</sup>. Bourke states that the rule enjoined among the Apaches is that the first four times that a young man goes to war, he must refrain from scratching

his head with his fingers, or letting water touch his lips<sup>3</sup>. Hence the two above mentioned implements.

<sup>1</sup> Goddard, "Hupa Texts", p. 313.

<sup>2</sup> "Wanderings of an Artist in North America", p. 399.

<sup>3</sup> "Medicine-Men of the Apache" (Ninth Ann. Rep. Bur. Ethnol.).

The reason of these prescriptions, even in this case, is not far to seek. The shedding of human blood and all acts leading thereto are defiling<sup>1</sup>. Therefore the same precautions used by the pubescent girl must be observed by the apprentice warrior.

A long leather cord attached both scratcher and tube to the Apache's belt and to each other, though some fractions of the tribe usually wore both in the hair.

As to the drinking reed, Captain Bourke hazards himself tentative explanations which he would not put forth if he had lived in the north and assimilated the ideas of the natives there. He suggests that the earliest conditions of the Apaches having obliged them to resort to all sorts of expedients in cooking and serving their food and drink, the reed may be a device which has survived the introduction of forks and spoons<sup>2</sup>, and was at one time necessary to avoid "the danger of burning the lips with both, or of taking into the mouth much earthly and vegetable matter or ice from springs and streams"<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. our chapter on War.

<sup>2</sup> Forks are, of course, an innovation among the Indians; but spoons seem to have been known to them from time immemorial.

<sup>3</sup> Bourke, *ubi suprà*.

## CHAPTER XVII.

**Marriage.****Native Ideals of Female Beauty.**

Speaking of the eastern Dénés Petitot has the following: "Jamais ils ne considèrent la beauté en s'épousant, et la bonté d'une femme ne consiste point pour eux dans la pureté de vie qu'elle aura pu mener avant son mariage. Qu'elle soit soumise, habile à travailler et laborieuse, féconde, joufflue et bien portante, tout le reste importe peu. Un garçon et une fille, si laids soient-ils, trouveront toujours un conjoint, s'ils sont capables de travailler et de nourrir une famille"<sup>1</sup>.

These remarks are certainly appropriate. Yet I would take objection to the initial statement that our aborigines have no consideration for beauty when they marry. Their considerations in choosing a partner are not of the highest order; but I cannot help believing that Petitot's assertion is of too sweeping a character. I know pertinently that, except in the case of a few unfortunates who are so circumstanced that they cannot think of a choice, the Dénés do pay great attention to that particular, while they do not overlook the more solid qualities enumerated by the learned missionary. But female beauty is with them of a type entirely at variance with that of our own ideal.

Even Hearne was not unaware of this when he wrote: "Ask a Northern Indian, what is beauty? He will answer: a broad flat face, small eyes, high cheek-bones, three or four broad black lines across each cheek, a low forehead, a large broad chin, a clumsy hook nose, a tawny hide, and breasts hanging down to the belt. Those beauties are greatly heightened, or at least rendered more valuable, when the possessor is capable of dressing all kinds of skins, converting them into the different parts of their clothing, and able to carry eight or ten<sup>2</sup> stone in summer, or haul a much greater weight in winter. These, and other similar accomplishments, are all that are sought after, or expected, of a Northern Indian woman. As to their temper, it is of little consequence; for the men have a wonderful facility in making the most stubborn comply with as much alacrity as could possibly be expected from those of the mildest and most obliging turn of mind; so that the only real difference is, the one obeys through fear, and the other complies cheerfully from a willing mind; both knowing that what is commanded must be done"<sup>3</sup>.

Dr. King evidently had this description before his eyes when he made an imaginary guest at a wedding feast exclaim in laudation of the bride: "Behold,

<sup>1</sup> *Monographie des Déné-Dindjè*, p. XXII.

<sup>2</sup> The stone here meant is fourteen pounds (Hearne).

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 89—90.



An Apache Bride.



my brethren, her broad flat face, small eyes, high cheek-bones, low forehead, broad chin, hooked nose, tawny hide, and pendent breasts, and you will say with me she is the very essence of perfection. Only perceive what strength she exhibits: a weight of two hundred pounds is nothing for her to carry; and as for hauling up a sledge, she will vie with any of the tribe”<sup>1</sup>.

Now, whether the esthetic sense of the natives has improved with contact with people of other ideals, or perhaps because the above portraits partake more or less of the nature of a caricature, it is certain that in the west they could not pass for faithful pictures of a typical Indian belle. There an oval face with big black eyes, very long and narrow eyebrows, abundant hair, low forehead, light complexion, big fatty cheeks, well developed bust with prominent breasts, and especially hips as broad as possible would pass for the *non plus ultra* of feminine beauty.

Two points are especially considered great desiderata: the length of the face and the breadth of the body. Grown up children as the Dénés are, it is in the heat of a dispute that the women betray their inmost sentiments; and their ideas on external appearances are fully shared by the male population. “You lynx!” is a most cruel insult, because of the roundness of that animal’s face; but the offended party will not fail to retort, unless the reproach be evidently unmerited: “you grass blade”! a term of vituperation which is scarcely less stinging, as a blade of grass is so slender and narrow.

But in polygamistic marriages there is no question that less showy qualities were formerly more in demand. Physical strength and laboriousness stood a better chance of winning the sympathies of man, especially if he was such a good hunter that he needed the services of many arms. Matonabbee, the great chief who accompanied Hearne in his last and only successful attempt to reach the Arctic Ocean, may be considered a typical Indian, and a good judge of the requisites of a woman. Now he “prided himself much in the height and strength of his wives, and would frequently say few women would carry or haul heavier loads; and though they had, in general, a very masculine appearance, yet he preferred them to those of a more delicate form and moderate stature”<sup>2</sup>.

### Betrothing and Courting.

“Les Tartares se marient très jeunes et toujours sous l’influence des parents”, says Huc in his invaluable book of travel through Asia<sup>3</sup>. The same is true of the immense majority of the Dénés, or at least of the girls among them. Mere children of ten or twelve were often given away as wives when the bid for them was sufficiently tempting. An occurrence which took place on the shores of Lake Superior had no doubt many counterparts in the wilds

<sup>1</sup> “Narrative of a Journey to the Shores of the Arctic Ocean”, vol. II, p. 44.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 88.

<sup>3</sup> *Souvenirs d’un Voyage dans la Tartarie*”, vol. I, p. 297.

of the far north, where the influence of our civilization was naturally slower in penetrating. It is related by a clerk of the X. Y. Company<sup>1</sup> in the following business-like lines, which show the scant respect then (1803) entertained for those precocious "marriages": "David a pris une jeune fille de 9 à 10 ans pour femme: je lui ai vendu de la marchandise. Il l'a renvoyée pour en prendre une autre plus grande; je lui ai aussi vendu de quoi habiller cette seconde<sup>2</sup>." Both transactions on the same day! This *sans gêne* tells volumes of the wanton levity with which most of the aboriginal unions were contracted.

However, in the far east the girls were always betrothed from the most tender age, always to men that were much older than themselves, and were regarded as likely props of their prospective father-in-law. From the age of eight or nine they were prohibited by custom from associating with children of the opposite sex, being watched with the most unremitting attention until they were actually given away by their parents. Hearne avers that girls "much younger" than ten or twelve were occasionally found engaged in the bonds of wedlock<sup>3</sup>.

As to the boys, they had naturally to show their efficiency as hunters before they could dream of marrying. Among the Koyukuns a youth had first to kill a deer, and if he should presume to take a girl to wife before he had given that proof of his ability to support a family, it was the universal belief that he would have no children.

On the other hand, in practically all the tribes the girl was considered as partaking of the nature of a chattel, and her owners, that is her parents, had a perfect right to dispose of her as they pleased<sup>4</sup>. Hence courtship, except to the parents, was something hardly thought of<sup>5</sup>. True, we are told that among the Hupas courtship — presumably to the girl — extended often through a summer and a winter<sup>6</sup>. But we know also that a male relative of the maiden had the right to dispose of her, and often did so, for a consideration. In other

<sup>1</sup> Which resulted from the temporary split in the North-West Company already mentioned.

<sup>2</sup> In Masson's "*Les Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest*", vol. II, p. 114, footnote.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 311. "A curious custom matrimonial is said to exist among them [the Loucheux of the lower Mackenzie], which Mr. Hardisty thus related to me. When a female child becomes two or three years old, a bargain is made by the parents, in which the mother is most interested, by some youth of the tribe, that she is to become his wife when marriageable; the settlement is deferred until that period, but the contract is always binding: and should another lover step in, and by any means succeed in obtaining the damsel, she is not considered to be his wife until he has made satisfactory compensation to the *ci-devant* bridegroom" (Hooper, "Tents of the Tuski", p. 271).

<sup>4</sup> Though never for prostitution purposes.

<sup>5</sup> What we call gallantry is so foreign to the Dénés' ideas that Dall, having one day presented a wild rose to a young Indian damsel, she accepted it, "but did not appear to know what to do with it. He put it up to her nose, when she turned away with a pugh as contemptuous as Hamlet's" (Whymper, "Travel and Adventure", p. 189).

<sup>6</sup> Goddard, "Life and Culture", p. 55.

words, she was purchased for sums in native currency which represented between 30 dollars and 100 dollars of our money. In these conditions it is difficult to see the good of any courtship of long or short duration, unless this should have had for its object the parents.

It is as well to state at once that everywhere, except at times with a few mountaineers whose sociology is of a very embryotic character, the girl had absolutely nothing to say for or against the proposed union. As Hearne very properly says, "all matches are made by the parents, or next of kin. On those occasions the women . . . implicitly obey the will of their parents, who always endeavour to marry their daughters to those that seem most likely to be capable of maintaining them, let their age, person, or disposition be ever so despicable"<sup>1</sup>. We shall presently see in what the above mentioned exception consisted.

### **Marriage in the Northwest.**

At least six different modes of contracting marriage, or rather of taking a woman to wife, prevailed through the entire nation. There was, to use a necessary misnomer, marriage by mutual consent, marriage by elopement, marriage by courting the parents, marriage by wrestling, marriage by kidnapping, and marriage by purchase.

The first method, marriage by mutual consent, was proper to a few mountain tribes. But it was hardly preceded by any courtship, except that which may be seen in the act of secretly presenting a few trifles to the intended bride. Often enough, when a Sékanais had made his choice, he would ask the maiden: "Will you pack my beaver nets for me?" To which she was free to make answer: "No; there are plenty of women: ask another one." But if agreeable to the girl, she would reply: "Perhaps; ask my mother."

The lad would do nothing of the kind, but the girl immediately told her of it, and, following her advice, she hastened to erect a hut of foliage alongside their own primitive dwelling place. In the evening, the affianced youth (for so he was after the proposee's answer) would, on entering it, hand her his beaver nets. Without further ceremony, they were man and wife. But even in such cases, at least the mother was supposed to have her say, and no doubt can be entertained that at times she asserted her rights.

This show of authority might, however, occasionally give rise to another form of "marriage", I mean elopement followed by permanent cohabitation. If a child came to cement the union, the fond grandparents would generally be but too prone to get reconciled to the advisability of the step taken without their sanction. Cases were not rare, either, when dissatisfaction at an infelicitous alliance prompted a new union by similar subreptitious means. At times also,

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<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 311.

but rather more seldom, the woman was possessed of a sufficient amount of will and nerve to prefer being the sole wife of a young hunter of no note to occupying the fourth or fifth place in the affections of a leader.

Among the Carriers and the Babines, the process was more tedious and marked by a somewhat wise slowness. According to their etiquette, the intended wife was never consulted; but when a youth of a different clan had singled her out, he would install himself in the home of her mother or of her maternal uncle, and set upon acting as the assiduous servant or co-worker of both, accompanying the girl's father or uncle in his hunts, and presenting him with anything of value that might occasionally come into his possession. Meantime, he would not as much as hint at the reason of such liberality, which was, however, easily guessed.

When, after two or three years wooing of his prospective bride's relatives, he thought a well deserved "yes" was likely to reward his perseverance, he would beg for her from her uncle, or next of kin, through the instrumentality of an obliging friend. If agreeable, the parents would direct their daughter to spread the blanket of "her husband" in a corner of the communal house. This first mention of a husband sanctioned a union concerning which no thought had ever been given to her personal inclinations.

If not accepted, the suitor was generally told in due time to desist from his officiousness and return to his own home. If for any reason his advances were refused after his services had been accepted and his gifts received for a period of time, the recipient of his bounties was in honour bound to compensate him therefor.

Needless to add that, with that system in vogue, early marriages were the exceptions, and divorces were also less frequent, as the prospect of having to commence again such a prolonged courtship acted as a powerful deterrent against hasty separations. Hence it was that the maiden had to wear the "virginal veil" for quite a few years.

If the girl was well born, rather than humiliate her parents by implying that they had been guilty of selfishness or that they had been unfortunate in their choice, she would put up with many wrongs and much cruel treatment at the hands of her spouse. As a rule, so lowly is the opinion that most Déné women have of their own sex and so submissive do they prove to their husbands, that it often happens that a union which was originally entered into with the greatest repugnance gradually becomes acceptable, and even finally enjoyable. Should, however, the alliance turn out an unbearable burden to the poor woman, to your reproaches that she should have spoken her mind before it was too late, she will answer *sotto voce*, as many have done to me: "What could I do? I am but a woman, and it was my duty to obey my parents."

### Wrestling for a Wife.

In the east matters stood very differently. There the determining factor in bringing about what we improperly call marriage was nothing else than an exhibition of physical strength or skill. The system was common to all the tribes east of the Rocky Mountains, within what is now Canada. It was even known to the Loucheux of Alaska.

As the child was sometimes given away to a man of fifty or more, when she could hardly realize the nature of the step of which she was the unconscious victim, it often came to pass that, when she attained the age of full maturity and was able to have her preferences, her husband was already verging on his decline. It was but natural that under the circumstances she should have secretly longed for a change in her situation. As a rule, she was not left long to pine therefore. If she was at all to the taste of a younger, and therefore stronger, man, he would simply provoke her husband to a duel.

There was nothing bloody or even dangerous in the encounter. It meant simply a wrestling contest. Fair play was to be observed, and though the struggle was public, nobody would have dreamt of interfering, not even the brother of the attacked party. Of course, the winner took the prize, that is, the young woman, and possessed it until he was himself beaten in a subsequent contest. In such cases, much as she may have been pleased with the result, etiquette demanded that she should seem loath to follow her new master.

So that in the east cohabitation was always of an uncertain duration, and what to us is marriage was there nothing else than a farce. No one was ever sure of living the next day with his wife, especially if no children had been born to deter a passer-by from attempting to win her over to his side, as it was customary for the offspring to follow the mother.

To some I may seem to be romancing; therefore some proof of the foregoing may be necessary. "It has ever been the custom among these people for the men to wrestle for any woman to whom they are attached", says Hearne, the best of our authorities, "and, of course, the strongest party always carries off the prize. A weak man, unless he be a good hunter and well-beloved, is seldom permitted to keep a wife that a stronger man thinks worth his notice: for at any time when the wives of those strong wrestlers are heavily-laden either with furs or provisions, they make no scruple of tearing any other man's wife from his bosom, and making her bear a part of his luggage. This custom prevails throughout all their tribes, and causes a great spirit of emulation among their youth, who are upon all occasions, from their childhood, trying their strength and skill in wrestling. This enables them to protect their property, and particularly their wives, from the hands of those powerful ravishers; some of whom make almost a livelihood by taking what they please from the weaker parties, without making them any return. Indeed, it is represented as an act of great generosity, if they condescend to make an unequal exchange;

as, in general, abuse and insult are the only return for the loss which is sustained”<sup>1</sup>.

The author then goes on to relate how some men cut off their hair and greased their ears before the struggle, in order to put their opponents to as great a disadvantage as possible, since most of the wrestling consisted in the hauling one another by the hair till one was overpowered and brought to the ground. He also remarks that, on such occasions, when an evidently weaker party was unwilling to give up the contest out of fear of losing his wife, his very relatives would advise him to do so lest he might get hurt. He then grows pathetic at the remembrance of some of the scenes he has witnessed. “It was very often”, he writes, “very unpleasant to me, to see the object of the contest sitting in pensive silence watching her fate, while her husband and his rival were contending for the prize. I have indeed not only felt pity for those poor wretched victims, but the utmost indignation, when I have seen them won, perhaps, by a man whom they mortally hated. On those occasions their grief and reluctance to follow their new lord has been so great, that the business has often ended in the greatest brutality; for, in the struggle, I have seen the poor girls stripped quite naked, and carried by main force to their new lodgings”<sup>2</sup>.

Hearne furthermore makes it very clear that these public struggles were not exceptions, but rather the rule, when he writes that “whenever any considerable number of them were in company, scarcely a day passed without some overtures being made for contests of this kind”<sup>3</sup>.

And these had not always for their objects women already possessed by others. For instance the young woman found alone in the wilderness by Hearne’s companions being quite comely, she was immediately the occasion of a lively struggle between the members of his party, “and the poor girl was actually won and lost at wrestling by near half a score different men the same evening”<sup>4</sup>.

After the foregoing it will be easily understood why the eastern Déné youths are “upon all occasions, from their childhood, trying their strength and skill in wrestling”, after the manner of the young Tatars of the great Asiatic plains<sup>5</sup>, and of the Koraks of eastern Siberia<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 104—105.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 107.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 106,

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 265.

<sup>5</sup> “Il nous fit remarquer ça et là dans le lointain des énfans qui jouaient à la lutte. C'est l'exercice favori de tous les habitants de notre pays de Efe, nous disait-il; chez nous on n'estime que deux choses dans un homme, savoir bien aller à cheval et être fort à la lutte” (Huc, *Souvenirs d'un Voyage dans la Tartarie*, vol. I, p. 119).

<sup>6</sup> Who similarly clutch one another by the hair (Bush, “Reindeer”, &c., p. 360).

The above will, I hope, suffice to carry conviction to the most skeptical, and will spare me the trouble of quoting from Mackenzie<sup>1</sup>, Hooper<sup>2</sup>, Richardson<sup>3</sup>, Keith<sup>4</sup>, and others, all of whom corroborate Hearne.

### Other Ways of Contracting Marriage.

A fifth way of contracting marriage was even more expeditious. A man would simply rush towards the object of his covetousness, seize her by the hair, and drag her to his tent<sup>5</sup>. This was especially done to strangers, or people of a different tribe. For a long time this method was openly practised by the Yellow-Knives with regard to the Dog-Rib women, to such an extent that, urged at last to action by the energy of despair and the instinct of the preservation of their homes, the long suffering Dog-Ribs had to fall on their whilom persecutors.

A sixth method was less violent and apparently more honest, though little more honourable for the dignity of woman. It consisted in purchasing her from her parents or guardians. Two or three dogs, a certain quantity of furs or dressed skins, or again some utensils and such trifles as had some value in the eyes of the natives were generally the price of the transaction in the north. But even in these cases people had sometimes to remember that in primitive society might is right<sup>6</sup>, inasmuch as a female who had been bought out could subsequently be won back in the course of a wrestling contest by the very party who had sold her.

This misfortune almost befell the great Matonabbee himself, when an Indian insisted on taking one of his eight wives by force "unless he complied with his demands, which were that Matonabbee should give him a certain quantity of ammunition, some pieces of iron-work, a kettle, and several other articles; every one of which Matonabbee was obliged to deliver or lose the woman; for the other man far excelled him in strength"<sup>7</sup>. Hearne, who relates the occurrence, adds that the leader "was more exasperated on this occasion as the same man had sold him the woman no longer ago than the nineteenth of the preceding April".

<sup>1</sup> He says in his unpublished Journal: "They often fight for their women; the strongest carries off the woman by the hair of her head. Their way of fighting is by pulling by the hair to bring their opponent to the ground, and there he is held until he gives up all claim to the woman" (In Masson's "*Les Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest*", vol. II, pp. 107—108, footnote). Huc says also (*op. cit.*, p. 298) that on the day of a wedding among the Tatars a simulated combat takes place, which ends in the carrying off of the bride.

<sup>2</sup> "Tents of the Tuski", p. 303.

<sup>3</sup> "Arctic Searching Exploration", vol. II, pp. 15 and 24.

<sup>4</sup> Masson, vol. II, p. 91.

<sup>5</sup> Hearne, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

<sup>6</sup> "That the weak ought to submit to the strong seems to be a general maxim with them" [the Yellow-Knives] (Keith, in Masson's vol. II, p. 107).

<sup>7</sup> Hearne, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

Purchase was the universal means of obtaining a wife in the south. We have already seen that the Hupa woman was paid for in native currency. This consisted in dentalium shells and woodpecker scalps, which were given to the party who had a right to dispose of her after a conference with the father or some male relative of the young man, in the course of which the price of the girl had been decided on.

Though the Navaho girls are betrothed at a very early age and some are married while mere children, the more common age for first marriages is from twelve to fifteen. The matches and terms of the contract are arranged by the families of both parties, the bride's maternal uncle fixing the dowry, or, to be more exact, the amount to be paid by the bridegroom's people, that is, from five to fifteen horses, according to the standing of the girl's family or her own personal accomplishments.

Horses constitute also the recognized means of exchange for a wife among the Apaches. Once the herd demanded has been delivered, the young brave goes off with her without further ado.

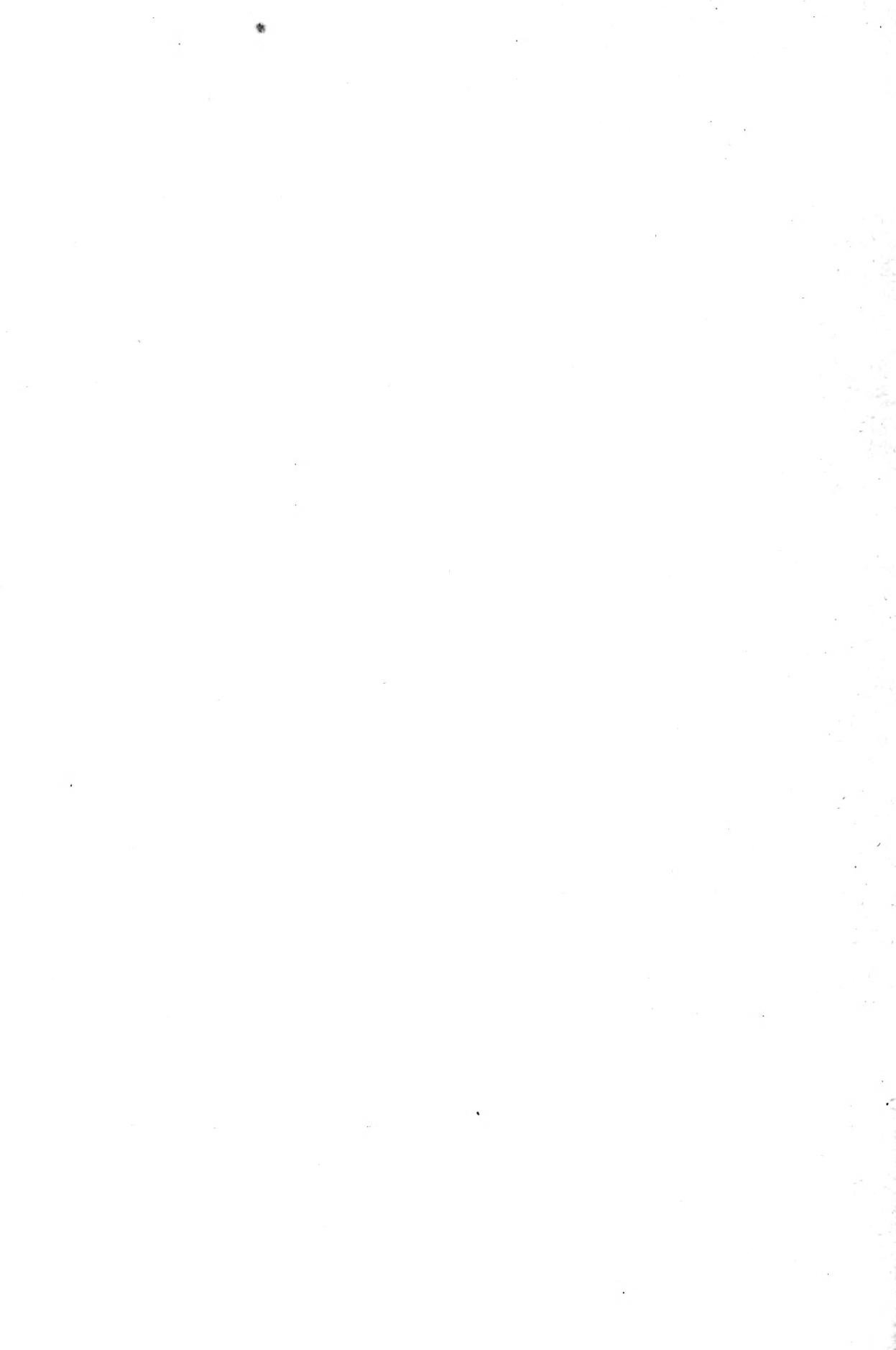
### Celebration of Marriage.

Not so, however, with their nearest congenerous neighbours, the Navahoes. These people, owing to intermixture of blood with the surrounding tribes and the peculiar receptiveness which characterizes the Dénés, are of a mystical turn of mind, and as much addicted to ceremonies and transcendentalism as their northern kinsmen are devoid of either. So, while in the north no ceremonial of any kind attends the contracting of marriage, the Navahoes would never think of entering so lightly into the bonds of wedlock. Here is an account of their ritual on such occasions.

"On the night set for the marriage both families and their friends meet at the hut of the bride's family. Here there are much feasting and singing, and the bride's family make return presents to the bridegroom's people, but not, of course, to the same amount. The women of the bride's family prepare cornmeal porridge, which is poured into a saucer-shaped basket. The bride's uncle then sprinkles the sacred blue pollen of the larkspur upon the porridge, forming a design as in the accompanying figure 69. The bride has hitherto been lying beside her mother, concealed under a blanket, on the woman's side of the hut. After calling her to come to him, her uncle seats her on the west side of the hut, and the bridegroom sits down before her, with his face toward hers, and the basket of porridge set between them. A gourd of water is then given to the bride, who pours some of it on the bridegroom's hands while he washes them, and he then performs a like office for her. With the first two fingers of the right hand he takes a pinch of the porridge, just where the line of pollen touches the circle of the east side. He eats this one pinch, and the bride dips with her fingers from the same place. He then takes in succession a pinch from the other places where the lines touch the circle



P. Beaulieu.  
The Son of a Half-breed who had twelve Wives.



and a final pinch from the center, the bride's fingers following his. The basket of porridge is then passed over to the younger guests, who speedily devour it with merry clamor, a custom analogous to dividing the bridecake at a wedding. The elder relatives of the couple now give them much good and lengthy advice, and the marriage is complete. After this many songs, which are really prayers, are chanted and sung by all the men, and the lips of the women may be seen moving as they repeat these song-prayers, but they give no utterance to the words<sup>1</sup>.

The ceremonial was not quite so elaborate among the Hupas. When the day of the wedding had arrived, the bride was conducted to her husband by a band of maids and young men from her village, who conveyed in canoes the presents given her. On the night of the nuptial party's arrival, a great feast was given. On the third day, those who had accompanied her returned with an equivalent number of gifts for the groom's family.

Dr. Goddard says that, when first settled in her new house, "if her husband was not pleasing, she sat on the smoky side of the fire that her tears might be assigned to the smoke"<sup>2</sup>. He adds: "She must endure until she learned to love her husband." This was exactly the case with ill-matched girls among the western Dénés.

As to nuptial ceremonies, or simple rejoicing or feasting on the occasion of a marriage in the north, there was banqueting to celebrate various stages in man's growth or social attainments, but I never heard of the least public acknowledgment of a wedding there, and believe none was ever indulged in, Dr. King to the contrary notwithstanding<sup>3</sup>.

### Restrictions to Marriage.

The Dénés think nothing of having two or three sisters to wives, and two brothers will also feel particularly happy if they can marry two sisters. The women like these unions, because they make them feel doubly at home. As far as impediments to marriage are concerned, we may say that consanguinity in the direct line, even to the fifth degree if known, will ordinarily prevent sexual intercourse, inasmuch as the offspring of the same ancestors regard themselves as brothers and sisters.

But the effects of consanguinity in collateral lines are viewed in a very different light according to the organic or fundamental constitution of the tribe. This is not the place to treat of matriarchy and patriarchy; yet for the proper understanding of the relations of the sexes it is necessary to state that, with tribes that are governed by mother-right, agnation is not recognized as a bar to marriage. Nay, a girl was formerly under the moral obligation

<sup>1</sup> A. M. Stephen, "The Navajo" (*Amer. Anthropologist*, Oct. 1893, pp. 356—357).

<sup>2</sup> "Life and Culture of the Hupa", p. 65.

<sup>3</sup> "Narrative of a Journey to the Arctic Ocean", pp. 43—44.

of wedding her first cousin on her father's side. We will see later on the reason of this ordinance. In fact, with people recognizing the same law, parentage through the paternal line was hardly regarded as a relationship at all. In virtue of the law of exogamy which strictly forbade all unions between members of the same clan, the father, himself belonging to a clan different from that of his wife, was almost a stranger to his own offspring<sup>1</sup>; and when it was a question of marriage, the children of his sister, for instance, were reputed perfectly eligible as wives for his own, because they belonged to a different clan.

As to affinity consequent on lawful or unlawful sexual intercourse, it was simply ignored. On the other hand, that which results from matrimonial alliances, such as that existing with a brother-in-law or a sister-in-law, is regarded as absolutely preventive of carnal relations with either, such kindred being viewed exactly as brothers and sisters, as among the Jews<sup>2</sup>.

It were scarcely advisable to give here a complete list of agnates and cognates, as named and ranked by even the principal Déné tribes. I shall content myself with a few short remarks on the more characteristic peculiarities of the Carriers' mode of reckoning the same.

1º They do not go beyond the second degree in computing, or at least in naming, their progenitors or offspring, whether in a direct or in a collateral line, and in no instance does any tribe that I know of have a name for any more distant degree than the third. Other relatives in either line are called respectively grandfather and grandmother if ascendants, or grandchildren if descendants.

2º Grand-uncles and grand-aunts, both maternal and paternal, are also called grandfather and grandmother.

3º Although they possess, and sometimes use, words meaning brother or sister without any reference to seniority, they more generally designate them as elder brother and elder sister, or younger brother and younger sister, as the case may be.

4º A son is *syé* to the father and *syaz* to the mother, while for "my daughter" the former will say *stsé* and the latter *syat'sé*.

5º Both nephews and nieces are known as *stsú* by their maternal uncle and *skwaz* by their maternal aunt; but either paternal uncle or aunt will call their nephew younger brother and their niece younger sister.

6º *Sthai* stands for both paternal uncle and step-father, and *spizyan* is the name of the paternal aunt; while *sæzé* means my maternal uncle and *sa'ke* my maternal aunt.

<sup>1</sup> In fact, an Indian is on record who, on being told of the death of his father, contented himself with remarking: "Let his own people mourn him", and went about his business without further concern.

<sup>2</sup> Levit., XVIII., 16.

7º The father-in-law and any of his brothers will be called *szaz*, and either the mother-in-law or her sisters will be known as *spiz*.

8º Maternal cousins of both sexes are *szit* to their correlative male cousin and *sunté*, if male, or *szit*, if female, to their correlative female cousin, whilst paternal cousins are always called brother or sister in the indefinite mode, as among the Jews.

9º *Stcay* does duty for a grandchild of either sex and also for the other offspring alluded to in the first remark. In the same way, brother-in-law and sister-in-law receive the common appellation *sre*.

10º A woman says *slærh* when addressing or speaking of the wife of her husband's brother, and both women are known collectively as *tlærhkhe*<sup>1</sup>.

11º The Sékanais and some other mountain tribes have but one word to designate the wife and the husband, much after the manner of our own neutral term *consort*.

Before bringing this section to a close, we must not forget to remark that the levirate was in full force amongst all the tribes. At the death of a man, his widow passed first under the guardianship and then into the possession as wife of his surviving brother, if he had any<sup>2</sup>. This law suffered no exception.

### Unholy Gratifications.

As Father Petitot very truly remarks, our people taken as a whole are entirely averse to incest<sup>3</sup>. Hearne admits himself that, while among the Crees it is not at all uncommon for one brother to make free with another brother's wife or daughter, "this is held in abhorrence by the Northern Indians"<sup>4</sup>. Unfortunately there are exceptions to most rules, and the latter author in speaking of incestuous unions feels warranted to couple with the name of the Crees those of the Athabascans and of the Neheaway, by which he evidently means the Nahanaïs. Of these he could not possibly know save through people of a different tribe, a generally very unreliable channel, as the rival aboriginal groups are constantly depreciating each other. He goes so far as to say that "many of them cohabit occasionally with their own mothers, and frequently espouse their sisters and daughters. I have known several of them who, after having lived in that state for some time with their daughters, have given them to their sons, and all parties been perfectly reconciled to it"<sup>5</sup>.

The fact that he means to speak from personal knowledge would brand his statement as unreliable as far as it affects the Nahanaïs, and I would therefore be tempted to disbelieve it, were it not that another authority says

<sup>1</sup> In all the foregoing native terms the initial *s-* stands for "my".

<sup>2</sup> See Gen., XXXVIII, 8; Deut., XXV, 9, 10.

<sup>3</sup> *Autour du Gd. L. des Esclaves*, p. 289.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 130.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p. 130, footnote.

of their neighbours, the Beavers of the north, with whom he was in close contact: "Mothers will cohabit with their sons, brothers with their sisters, but a father will seldom cohabit with his daughter<sup>1</sup>."

Of the Slave Indians Petitot says also that he knew a man who was cohabiting with his mother-in-law, after the death of his wife<sup>2</sup>. It seems not a little strange that the mountain tribes, who are people exceptionally pure in their private lives, should precisely be those who are the most ready to publicly set at defiance the laws of decency as regards the relations of the sexes. I must say that I have myself heard of a few unions among the remotest Sékanais which would scarcely be approved by the canons of any Christian Church, though, to the best of my remembrance, they could not be compared to those mentioned by Hearne and Wentzel.

The latter says in the same letter that, among the northern Beavers, "one woman is common to two brothers and often to three". I have also heard of a few cases of polyandry in the midst of the Sékanais bands. These, however, were found only in the tribes that systematically practised infanticide at the birth of female children.

Polygamy was much more general. In fact, it was recognized among all the tribes, north and south. Though many Dénés were out of sheer necessity monogamists, every man who had any social ambition had at least two wives, and the lodges of the leaders may have contained from two to seven or eight. Three was a fair average for men of that condition, though Harmon mentions the case of a Beaver chief who had eleven with more than forty children<sup>3</sup>, and Dall cites a Loucheux who had "at least eighteen wives<sup>4</sup>".

John McLean writes that, though polygamy was allowed among the Carriers, "only one of the women is considered as wife"<sup>5</sup>. He is certainly mistaken in this respect. All were theoretically on the same footing in the household, though, as a matter of fact, the husband would unconsciously allow a greater influence to some favourite who may have been the last in order of priority of cohabitation. The wives of the same man called themselves sisters.

<sup>1</sup> W. F. Wentzel, letter in Masson's "*Les Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest*", vol. I, p. 86.

<sup>2</sup> "*Autour du Grand Lac des Esclaves*", p. 348. In his work "*En Route pour la Mer glaciale*", he mentions a woman who was the second wife of her own father (p. 382)!

<sup>3</sup> "A General Account of the Indians on the East Side of the Rocky Mountain", p. 294.

<sup>4</sup> "Travels on the Yukon", p. 111.

<sup>5</sup> "Notes of a Twenty-five Years' Service in the Hudson's Bay Territory", vol. I, p. 300.





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